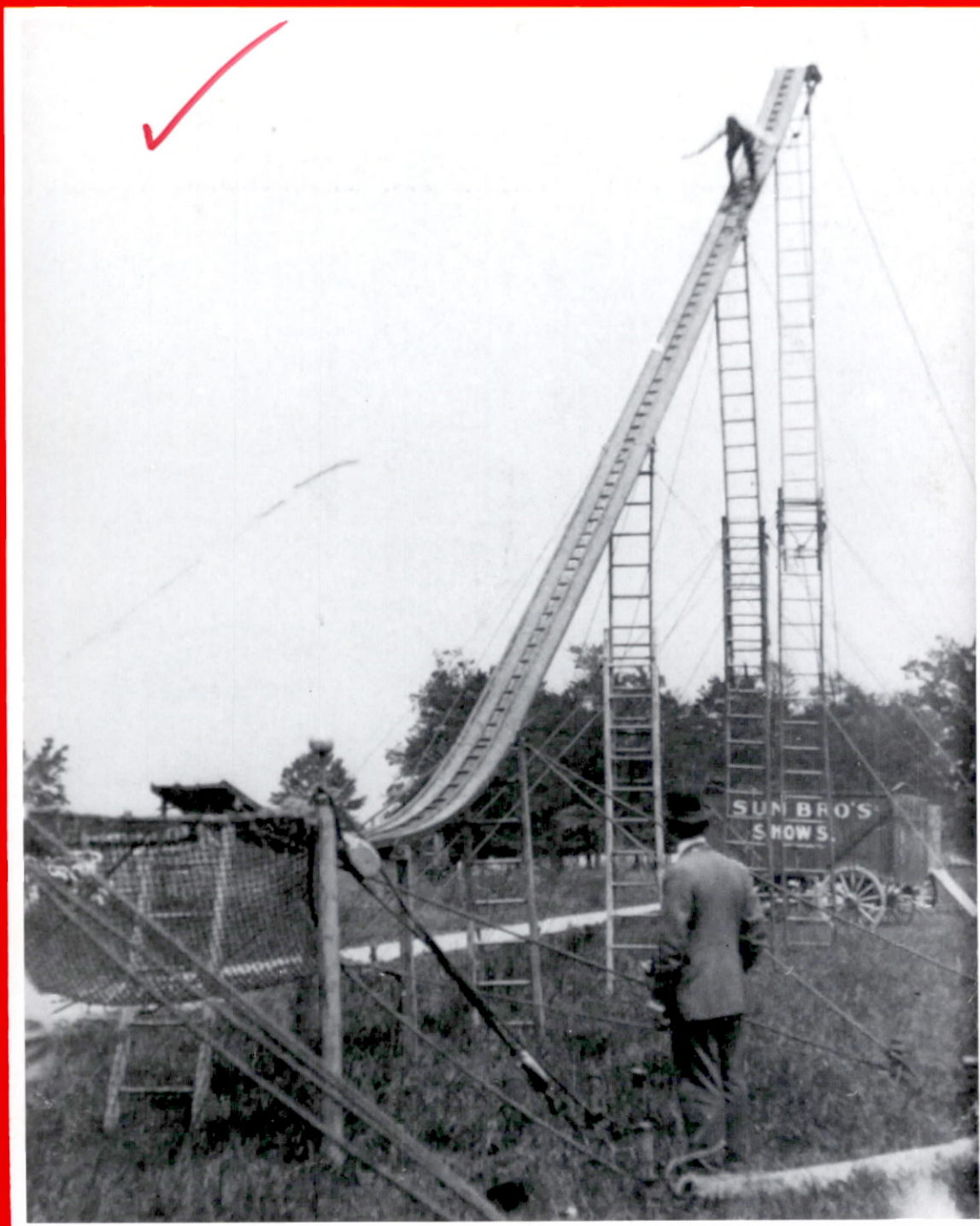


Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAY-JUNE 1994



BANDWAGON

The Journal of the Circus Historical Society

Vol. 38, No. 3

May-June 1994

FRED D. PFENING, JR., EDITOR

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor-Bill Biggerstaff, Production and Graphics
Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

BANDWAGON, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society (USPS 406-390) (ISSN 0005 4968), is published bi-monthly. Second class postage paid at Columbus, OH. Editorial, advertising and circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221. Phone (614) 294-5361. Advertising rates are: Full page \$95.00, half page \$55.00, quarter page \$35.00. Minimum ad is \$20.00. The BANDWAGON is produced using a Macintosh IIfx computer, DesignStudio and TypeStyler software.

Bandwagon subscription rates, \$19.00 to members and non-members in the United States, \$24.00 per year outside the United States. Single copies \$3.00 plus \$2.00 postage. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BANDWAGON, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212.

Offices of the Circus Historical Society are located at 3477 Vienna Ct., Westerville, OH 43081.

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY-Fred Dahlinger, Jr., President, 451 Roblee Rd., Baraboo, WI 53913; Richard J. Reynolds III, Vice President, 1186 Warrenhall La. NE, Atlanta, GA. 30319; Dale C. Haynes, Secretary-Treasurer, 3477 Vienna Ct., Westerville, OH 43081.

DIRECTORS: Div. 1-Fred D. Pfening, Jr., 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221 (Ohio-Mich.-Ind.); Div. 2-Copeland MacAllister, 30 Salem End Rd., #2A, Framingham, MA 01701 (N.H.-Maine-Vt.-Mass.-Ct.-Del.-R.I.); Div. 3-William L. Rhodes, 2528 Taylorsville Rd., Louisville, KY 40205 (N.Y.-N.J.-Pa.-Md.-D.C.-Va.-W. Va.-Ky.); Div. 4-Joseph T. Bradbury, 1453 Ashwoody Ct., N.E., Atlanta, GA 30319 (N.C.-S.C.-Ga.-Ala.-Fla.-Miss.-Tenn.-Ark.-La.); Div. 5-Guy J. Fiorenza, P. O. Box 12, Rockford, IL 61105 (Wis.-Ill.-Minn.-Iowa-Mo.); Div. 6-Orin C. King, 5225 SW 20 Terrace #302, Topeka, KS 66604 (N.D.-S.D.-Kan.-Neb.-Okla.-Tex.); Div. 7-Joseph S. Rettinger, P.O. Box 20371, Phoenix, AZ 85036 (Col.-Mont.-Ida.-Wyo.-N. M.-Utah-Nev.-Ariz.); Div. 8-Michael D. Sporrer, 14537 N. E. 40th St. #H202, Bellevue, WA 98007 (Wa.-Ore.-Ca.-Hawaii); Div. 9-Dr. Gordon D. Brown, 7459 Saskatchewan Dr., Edmonton, Alb., Can. 76G-2A5 (All countries outside the United States.)

Bill Baus 3883
117 Edwin Ave. SE
Massillon, OH 44646

Lisa S. M. Langham 3884
732 Arlington Ave.
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Robert Huffman 3885
P. O. Box 478
Kathleen, FL 33849

Virginia N. Egan 3886
342 S. Elizabeth St.
Lombard, IL 60148

Timothy C. Hatch 3887
201 Seneca St.
Corning, NY 14830

Richard E. Lokeman 3888
1600 E. Seventh St.
Merrill, WI 54452

William A. Shields 3889
75540 Mary Lane
Indian Wells, CA 92210

REINSTATED

James R. Evans 1356
10640 Louisa Rd.
Lena, IL 61048-9630

1994 CHS CONVENTION

An exciting convention agenda is being arranged for the December 7-10, 1994 gathering in Sarasota. An eclectic mixture of past and present personalities will be on the program, offering an opportunity for members to learn about the triumphs of history and the challenges faced by today's showman. Formal papers, a slide show, informal interviews and site visits will be part of the programming.

The convention hotel will be the Holiday Inn Airport-Marina, located conveniently between Sarasota and Bradenton on North Tamiami Trail. Room rates will be \$49 for standard view and \$59 for bayview rooms, with suites available. A block of rooms has been set aside for the CHS. Reservations can be made by calling 813-355-2781 and asking for Julia, front desk manager. Advise her you are making a CHS convention reservation. The hotel offers complimentary van service to and from the Sarasota airport.

CHS member George Hubler is assembling a stellar cast for an outstanding Showfolks Circus. We will have the opportunity to see both well known acts and some surprise appearances by circus greats. The Saturday night show is an important event on the circus social calendar.

A registration response card will be in the July-August *Bandwagon*.

THIS MONTH'S COVER

The Sun Bros. Circus presented a free act on the midway rather than parading. The act, presented at 12:30 PM each day, drew people to the lot prior to matinee. The free act was promoted with a drawing in the show's newspaper advertisements.

The cover photograph shows Boche, champion ski-jumper of Canada, the free act on Sun Bros. Circus in 1907. The photo is from the Circus World Museum collection.

DUES NOTICES MAILED

Circus Historical Society dues and subscription notices were mailed in April. Secretary-Treasurer Dale Haynes will appreciate your mailing your check or money order in the return envelope provided. Please check your address and zip code and advise of any corrections.

If your payment is not received by July 15, 1994 your July-August *Bandwagon* will not be mailed. Late payers should send \$20.

Individuals can show their support for the CHS by becoming Sustaining, Contributing and Concessionaires Club members by paying \$25, \$50 or \$100, rather than the standard rate of \$19. Over 250 members sent extra amounts last year.

ERRATUM

Five lines were omitted from the Orin King installment in the March-April issue.

These lines should have appeared at the bottom of column three on page 36. "upon the mighty responsibility resting on, perhaps, a single pin.

"Willie Sells was in Topeka late in November looking for winter quarters for Sells & Rentfrow. The village of Oakland,"

NEW MEMBERS

Kendell H. Lester 3867
200 South St. RR #1, Box 285
Avon, IL 61415

Mitchell J. Copeland, Sr. 3868
1432 Tam O'Shanter Lane
Kokomo, IN 46902

Carol and Richard Avol 3880
240 W. Gilman St.
Madison, WI 53703

Michael Hunter 3881
P. O. Box 418
Bethlehem, PA 18016

Charles Hoster 3882
642 Willow St.
Hammond, IN 46320

SALE

1/2" Scale Elephants \$7.50
1/2" Scale Camels 7.95
1/2" Draft Horses 4.95

Plus shipping and handling.
\$3.00

CLASSIC KITS
P. O. BOX 0262
KITRELL, NC 27544-0262

Also send stamped self
addressed envelope for
price list of kits we carry.
Happy circusing.



Do you have our current "K"
catalog?

If not you are missing out.

We carry the best in
"HO" and "O"

Circus Kits, Books, Posters
and collectibles.

We've got something for
everybody.

Send \$4.00 to:
STAR CIRCUS SUPPLIES
3037 Grass Valley Hwy.
Auburn, CA 95602

AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF

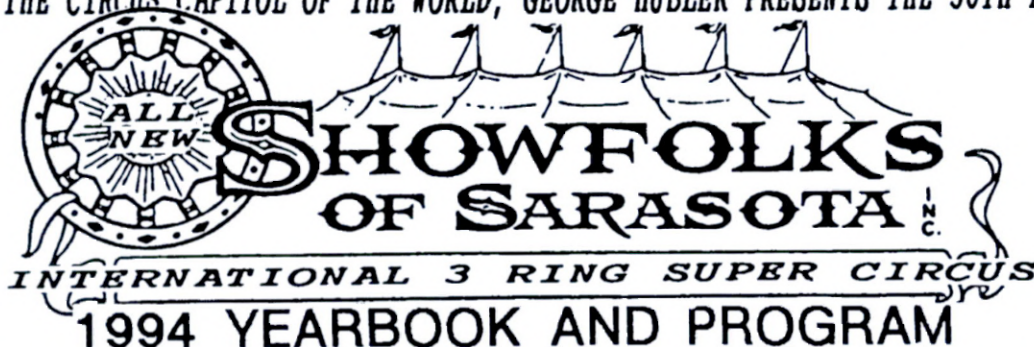
BANDWAGON

1966-Jan.-Feb.
1967-July-Aug., Nov.-Dec.
1968-All but Jan.-Feb.
1969-July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.
1971-All but May-June.
1972-All available.
1973-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1974-All but Mar.-Ap.; May-June.
1975-All available.
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.
1978-All available.
1979-All but Jan.-Feb.
1980-1986-All available.
1987-All but Nov.-Dec.
1988-1993-All available.

Price is \$3.00 each. Add \$2.00 postage for
one issue, \$3.50 for more than one issue.
Please select substitutes in case we are out
of any of above.

BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES
2515 DORSET RD.
COLUMBUS, OH 43221

FROM THE CIRCUS CAPITOL OF THE WORLD, GEORGE HUBLER PRESENTS THE 30TH ANNUAL



ADV PRICES: \$200 Full Page; \$100 Half Page \$75 1/4 Page; \$50 1/8 Page; \$35 Bus. Card

Mail Ad Copy and check to:

Showfolks Circus 94' Attention: George Hubler
5275 Denise Dr Dayton O. 45429 A/C 513-434-3744
JENNIE WALLEN CUSTOMERS CALL A/C 813-351-2775

**** THANKS CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

WE ARE HAPPY AND HONORED THAT THE PUBLICATION OF THIS BOOK, A VIRTUAL WHO'S
WHO OF THE CIRCUS WORLD, PLUS OUR 3 RING INTERNATIONAL SUPER CIRCUS AT
ROBARTS ARENA DEC. 9 & 10, COINCIDES WITH YOUR C.H.S. NATIONAL CONVENTION!

MY FAMILY'S CIRCUS SUN BROS. WORLD'S PROGRESSIVE SHOWS

BY JACK K. SUN
COL. USAF (RET.)

My last United States Air Force base before retiring was Wright-Patterson near Dayton, Ohio. We lived nearby on the way to Xenia and a next door neighbor was the late Richard Conover, then treasurer of the Circus Historical Society. It didn't take long for the subject of circuses to come up and in particular, Sun Brothers. Much useful information for this article came from Conover's files.

CAROLINE KLOTZ

This history of the Sun brothers and their circus is dedicated to the memory of Caroline Louise Gruen Klotz, their mother who, despite the early, untimely loss of her husband John, successfully raised her seven young children with few resources. The top level of achievement that they reached in show business was due in no small part to the strong family environment that they experienced. As a part of this, Caroline Klotz provided the basic moral and spiritual thinking that grew into the Sun circus operating policies that resulted in its being known as a good, clean family circus, a Sunday school show.

The Sun brothers were born to German parents, John and Caroline Klotz. John and Caroline had been married in 1856, Caroline having emigrated from Dresden, Germany. John, also a German immigrant, was a tug boat captain who settled in Oswego, New York.

The Oswego Canal connected Oswego and Lake Ontario with the Erie Canal which opened in 1825. It was later deepened and improved to carry the ever increasing traffic between Lake Erie and the Hudson River to reach New York City. As a result, the

Oswego Canal began to decrease in importance. What impact this may have had on the John Klotz family moving to Toledo is not apparent. But move they did in 1860 or 1861. The first daughter in the family, Amelia, was born in Oswego in 1859. Two other daughters were born in

Sun Bros. lithograph showing George and Pete Sun. It was printed by the Erie Litho Co. Circus World Museum collection.



Toledo, Louise in 1864 and Helena in 1867.

In Toledo, John drove a team of draft horses, was a contractor and operated a small hotel with the aid of Caroline. John died in 1873, just a year after their fourth son Peter was born. This left Caroline with seven young children, ranging in age from one to eleven. For income she had only a small hotel which was an impoverished establishment catering mainly to laid-off drummers and "at liberty" entertainers.

One of the performers who visited the hotel and stayed for some time was a juggler named Professor Otto. His juggling fascinated the Klotz kids and they learned a few simple tricks from him. Mamma Klotz was a strict Lutheran who considered show business sinful. She tried to discourage her sons' interest. However, when Professor Otto packed up his juggling plates and balls and departed, he left behind some dirty laundry, an unpaid bill and four stage struck boys.

It was necessary for all the boys to leave school at an early age to go to work to support the family. They worked at factories and wherever else they could find a job. But they continued to practice juggling and other tricks they had learned from Professor Otto. They also looked for and began to find opportunities to perform locally. This continued to stimulate their interest in entertainment. Each of the Sun brothers went his own way, initially, in breaking into show business.

JOHN (KLOTZ) SUN

John was the first child born to John and Caroline Klotz, arriving in 1858 when they lived in Oswego. There is little information about John. I knew him when I was growing up in Toledo from 1919 until 1932. He lived with us for a while during the 1920's. I remember talking with Uncle John about Sun Brothers Circus, but I don't recall learning very much.

One interesting source of information on John's early show life that turned up recently was a letterhead on which he called himself J. H. Jamima, formerly John Klotz. It quotes a news article from the June 28, 1883 Leadville, Colorado *Daily Herald*: "Jamima, Juggler, handled huge dice and other articles as though the laws of gravitation had been suspended for the time being, or threw sharp knives about and caught them again with reckless indifference."



Caroline Klotz. Author's collection.

The letterhead also contains a quote by the famous showman, John Robinson, "I can recommend Mr. Jamima as a First Class Artist, doing one of the strongest and most novel juggling acts in the business. He has given the best of satisfaction the past two seasons." The two seasons were spent with Robinson's World Exposition.

The letterhead states that he had 12 years experience. He was 25 years old at that time. Therefore, he must have begun performing at the early age of 13. That John used the name J. H. Jamima for some time was news to me. Dad and the other Sun brothers were no doubt aware of this,

John Sun. Author's collection.



but I don't recall it ever being mentioned.

John was seriously injured in an accident that I believe happened while performing. When John lived with us in Toledo, he could only get around on crutches or a cane. John's injury probably occurred before the Sun brothers started the circus, as it was never mentioned in numerous articles in *Clipper* and *Billboard* on Sun Bros. Circus that I have.

In a newspaper interview in 1933, John said his injuries were the result of tricks he performed in his younger days. These performances involved juggling cannon balls, turning somersaults and catching and juggling swords three and a half feet long, with four double revolutions, and his ankle twist dance, turning his heels between his legs in front of him backwards and forwards across the stage and turning his heels in front of him and walking across the stage. If you find this dance, said to have caused John's injuries, difficult to understand, I'm not surprised. So do I.

John began performing at the early age of seven, by "mountebanking," which was doing an act in the open air or in saloons and passing the hat as a reward for the performance. At ten he was walking from town to town, near Toledo, Clyde, Bellvue, Sandusky, Fostoria, and Fremont, where he started the first concert hall. These were towns that the Sun Bros. Circus later played.

In 1887, on January 23 and December 4, John appeared at the People's Theater in Toledo during two Grand Complimentary Benefit performances given for George Sun. These benefits were given in recognition of George's injuries suffered while performing and his successful return to show business in spite of his injuries. John was billed as the "Wonder Worker."

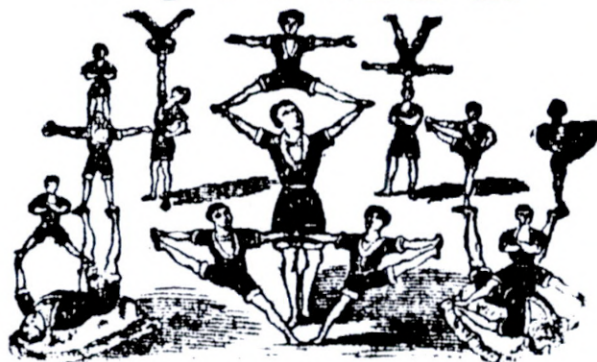
John also performed with Sun's Phantasma & Novelty Co., during the 1890-91 season. This group of fourteen, which was organized and managed by George Sun, was one of the show business ac-

tivities that predated the beginning of Sun Bros. Circus in 1892.

John was one of the four Sun Brothers who started the circus. The other brothers, George, Gus and Pete, also had performing backgrounds, but John was the oldest and had been in show business much earlier than his brothers. John's participation in the start of the Sun Bros. was

SUN BROS.' New United Shows

And Trained Animal Exhibition will exhibit at
Columbus two days,
Sept. 4 and 5.



Grand Free High Wire Ascension on Show
Grounds at 1 p. m.
Performance Afternoon and Night at 2 and 8
p. m.

Sun Brothers have the largest Wagon Show on
earth. Admission 25c. Children admitted after
noons only for 10c.

SHOW GROUNDS—Monday, Sept. 4, West
Broad street, corner Heron. Tuesday, Sept. 5,
South High, between Deshler and Thurman.

Sun Bros. New United Shows played two different lots in Columbus, Ohio in 1893. John Polacsek collection.

confirmed in a news article in the October 2, 1959 Springfield, Ohio *Daily News*, when brother Gus died.

John was 34 years old in 1892 when the circus started and had much actual experience performing in circuses. As the oldest brother when Professor Otto stayed at the Klotz Hotel, it is likely that he was able to learn the most from him about juggling and other show business techniques. He was then able to pass this knowledge along to his younger brothers. With this background it is also likely that John played a key role in getting the Sun circus organized and underway.

Although John apparently was active the first year or two of the circus, there is no evidence of his participation in the circus thereafter. In 1896, four years after the circus was started, a Toledo newspaper ran a lengthy article on the Suns' progress

in show business. There were large drawings of the other three brothers, but none of John. Another newspaper article written about that time, stated John had been in the real estate business in New York after his performing years.

John moved to Florida in the 1930s. He never married and died in Tampa in 1941.

GEORGE (KLOTZ) SUN

George was the third child and second son, arriving in 1862. By then the family had left Oswego and moved to Toledo. The Klotz family home was then on Washington Street, between St. Clair and Superior. That was in the original part of Toledo. It probably would have been considered "downtown Toledo" in the 1860's and still is.

George was a juggler, as were all the Sun brothers. He became the world's leading acrobatic juggler, according to an article written by Ambrose Boston in the August 3, 1975 Lexington, Kentucky *Herald-Leader*.

He was with Barnum & Bailey, Wallace & Co., Batcheller & Doris and several other smaller enterprises including the Charles Andress Magic Show before the formation of the Sun Bros. Circus. In addition he played the leading vaudeville theaters in the United States.

George was seriously injured in a fall in 1884 while doing a triple somersault over three elephants.

After his injury, George was encouraged by his show business friends to return to performing and did so, not withstanding being almost completely paralyzed from the waist down. Expenses

George Sun. Author's collection.



connected with his injuries almost wiped out the substantial money George had been able to accumulate. The friends who had encouraged his return to show business, organized two benefits in 1887 to help him recover financially. These were given at the well known People's Theater in Toledo. George and John performed in both of these benefits, Gus in one.

During the 1890-91 season George took a group on tour called Sun's Phantasma & Novelty Company. There were fourteen performers, including three women and his older brother John who was billed as a "Star."

In the mid and later 1890s and early 1900s, after the show had moved to rail cars, George was the manager and Pete the general agent. George was the hands-on manager of the show while Pete was responsible for local arrangements, including contracts, advertising, licenses, and rail transportation.

George married Jessie Kraut in 1895 in Hamilton County, Ohio. She was the daughter of an innkeeper. Jessie was one of twelve children of John and Ellen Kraut. He was from Sonnenberg, Germany, and she from Limerick, Ireland. Two of Jessie's brothers, Edward H. "Mannie" and John G. "Dol" Kraut were active on the staff of the Sun show for some years. I can remember dad saying that they were very capable and well thought of.

George and Jessie had three children, George Jr. born 1898, Eileen in 1902 and Jessie Marie in 1907. Two of the children became circus performers. At the age of three George became a clown and performed in the center of the ring with Bill Reid, an adult clown. Later, at the age of six, he became an equestrian. Initially, he rode standing with one foot on each of

Performers on Sun Bros. World's Progressive Shows in 1898 in New Baltimore, Pennsylvania. Circus World Museum collection.

two ponies. Then he graduated to riding bare-back in a similar manner on two white horses. He was considered the youngest bare-back rider in the world. Eileen also became a circus performer at an early age. She was an equestrienne, and like George first rode two ponies bare-back, then two horses.

Despite his injuries, George was able to perform very well and later played a key role in the organization, operation and management of the show for many years. George's health, however, deteriorated over the years and at the close of the 1912 season he sold his interest in the circus to his brother Pete. The George Sun family moved to Hot Springs, Arkansas to take advantage of the warm baths there. On previous visits, the baths appeared to be helping with his health problems. George Sr. died June 15, 1917 in Hot Springs. George Jr. graduated from high school there in 1918. Jessie and the family then moved to Lexington, Kentucky to be near other members of her family and friends. They lived there for many years.

George Jr. and his wife Sarah who he married in 1945, had no children. Eileen and Jessie Marie never married. I could not understand why they hadn't, as both were outstanding, very capable and well liked by all. George Jr. was with the Internal Revenue Service for many years and later carried on his accounting work in private practice. George Jr., Sarah, Eileen and Jessie used to come to visit us in Toledo and at our Lake Erie cottage which was in our family for many years. Eileen, the last of the family, died in Tucson, Arizona in 1989 after a very full and active



Sun Bros. Circus baggage wagon. Circus World Museum collection.

life. George Sr.'s wife Jessie died in 1953, Jessie Marie in 1980 and George Jr. in 1986. It is unfortunate that there are no descendants of this fine family.

GUSTAVE FERDINAND (KLOTZ) SUN

Gus was the fifth child and third son, arriving on October 7, 1868 in Toledo. He left school at an early age, after the fourth reader, and went to work to earn money for the family at various jobs in Toledo including at the Singer Sewing Machine factory. Later he went to work at a pool hall in New York City where he would set up pool balls in the daytime, and practice juggling them at night. He also had an opportunity to observe professional jugglers and other performers at work on the stage and learn new tricks.

Gus returned to Toledo to rejoin the family and tried to learn a trade, but his interest in show business continued and he practiced juggling at night. He had an opportunity to perform publicly as a beginner, first in Toledo, then in other small Ohio towns. He joined the Amaranth Minstrels as a performer, later the Somerville and Fry Circus in Chicago. Gus began to look for other opportunities to perform during the off-season in dime museums, which then operated like theaters.

At that time, medicine shows were very popular and needed performers to attract customers. A good performance helped greatly to sell the Indian health remedies introduced at the end of the show. Using American Indians as examples of good health, the remedies were touted as being

able to cure all diseases and, of course, worms too.

After performing for some time with medicine shows, in theaters and with circuses, Gus one year took out a medicine show on his own. He did so well that he began to think of bigger things.

Around 1896 Gus formed the Gus Sun Rising Minstrels. A few years later, the minstrel business being very poor, he took out an Uncle Tom's Cabin show in the off-season. His wife Nellie, who he married in 1897, and their little daughter Louise went along playing Topsy and Little Eva.

Gus entered the theater business in 1904 in Springfield, Ohio, renting a small storeroom. Business was bleak in the beginning but grew rapidly. Gus and a partner operated ten theaters by 1907. Gus then got into booking vaudeville acts, first for his own theaters, later for others. Many well known performers got their start in vaudeville on what was then known as "Gus Sun Time," including Bob Hope.

The Gus Sun Booking Agency handled many other performers, including the Ted Lewis and Paul Whiteman bands, Eddie Cantor, W. C. Fields, Marie Dressler, Raymond Hitchcock, Will Rogers, Sophie Tucker, Walter Huston, Chic Sale, Al Jolson, the Marx Brothers, and a "hooper" named Walter Winchell who later became a newspaper reporter and television star.

The Gus Sun Booking Agency, during vaudeville's "hey day," had eleven offices, including ones in London and Paris. As moving pictures and especially talking pictures took over the entertainment field, vaudeville disappeared. Gus Sun Booking began supplying acts for county and state fairs and whenever else performers were needed. The agency continued for many years.

The outstanding fifty year career of Gus Sun in show business was recognized by his appearance on the cover of *Billboard* on April 29, 1939. In the accompanying article, his exceptional talents, initially as an actor, later as a showman, then as a very successful entrepreneur, were related.

Gus' success in show business brought him substantial financial rewards. He accumulated considerable wealth and property at a time when millionaires were not common. He felt that he had worked long, hard and successfully for many years to achieve a high level of financial security. He wanted to do some of the things that had not been possible during his earlier years. He became an avid sportsman, a golfer, and traveled extensively. Deer and moose hunting, and fishing trips to Canada were annual events for a number of years, often with dad and other show business friends. Sev-

eral times they went to Stuttgart, Arkansas, to enjoy the fabulous duck and goose shooting in that area.

Gus and Nellie had four children, Louise, Nina, Gus Jr. and Bob. Nina died at an early age in 1920. Gus Jr. was the only one active in show business, initially as a musician. He played for some time with Ted Lewis, then, one of the big name bands. Later he was in management in the Gus Sun Booking Agency.

Louise Sun Remsberg lived in Springfield, Ohio at the time I was stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton. Gus Sun, Sr. died in Springfield in 1959 at the age of 91. That had been his family's hometown since the early 1900s. "Sunnyside," the family home, was well known.

We saw Louise and other members of the Gus Sun family at that time and have maintained contact with her. She was an outstanding person and a good friend, and was the last of Gus and Nellie's children to die (1991). Gus Jr. died in 1983 and Bob in 1988. Fortunately, there are surviving members of all three families to carry on the name.

PETER (KLOTZ) SUN

Peter, my father, was the last child, arriving in 1872 in Toledo. Fourteen months later, father John passed away.

Peter and his brothers all went to work at an early age and had little formal schooling. He carried newspapers, and worked in local factories, as had his brothers, to help bring home money for the large family. From that humble beginning, it is truly amazing the level the Sun brothers ultimately reached in show

Gus Sun. Author's collection.



business. This speaks well for Caroline as a mother, and also for the Suns' ability and determination.

Pete, like his brothers, had been exposed to circus performers at an early age and took naturally to show business. He also began performing as a juggler while very young. He went on to learn slack and tight-wire performing and became an aerial acrobat. In addition, he was a clown and developed one of the best paper tearing acts in show business.

Paper tearing was done with newspapers or other suitable paper folded and torn with precision into intricate patterns. The result was an attractive lace-like doily or table cloth. Pete retained this skill all his life and enjoyed demonstrating it to newspaper reporters while they were interviewing him.

Pete also performed in medicine shows. There is little information available on this activity, but I do recall his telling of being with "Diamond" Jim during his medicine show days. From dad's description, "Diamond" Jim must have been a very impressive and successful medicine show man. This I would interpret as meaning, that at the end of Pete's performance, Jim would sell lots of Indian "Kick-a-poo" juice. It was a very popular remedy at the time and perhaps had a bit of alcohol in it as was rumored. Pete's time with medicine shows would have been in his teen years.

Gus and John participated in the circus during the wagon show days and the early years after they moved to railroad cars. However, George and Pete were the chief proprietors of the circus over the years. Gus turned his interests in other directions, minstrels, theaters and then vaudeville booking. John's earlier injuries no doubt limited his activities.

Pete married Vira Maddock of Cincinnati, Ohio in 1910. The family home was established in Cincinnati, on the North side. Pete Jr. arrived first, followed by Paul and then by John. I've gone by the name of Jack since my early years. Harriet, my "favorite sister," arrived a few years later, completing the Pete and Vira Sun family.

THE SUN BROS. CIRCUS

After operating a hall show over the winter of 1891-1892 George and Gus Klotz bought some equipment from Walter L. Main in early 1892. The Klotz brothers advertised in the April 23, 1892 New York *Clipper* for a six piece band, performers, a boss canvas man and a prop man. The ad stated that the show would play three nights a week.

They later changed their name to Sun because they thought it was a better name for the circus. How the name Sun was chosen for the circus is not clear. One of



Peter Sun. Author's collection.

the stories is that it relates to their early practice sessions when they were learning how to juggle. They would practice at dawn when the sun was rising before going to work. Then they would practice again in the evening after returning from work as the sun was setting. According to this version the brothers concluded that as they had spent so many hours practicing when the sun was rising and setting, Sun might be a good name for the circus.

Circuses in America have used some unusual titles such as Moon Bros., Globe Bros., Orange Bros., Trapeze Bros., Heritage Bros., World Bros. and Royal Bros. The Klotz boys were the only ones that adopted a non traditional name for their circus and their family.

Sun Bros. Great Moral Show opened, with all four brothers, in Toledo to poor business on May 15 and traveled by box car with the personnel staying in hotels. The show moved through small towns in

Sun Bros. letterhead used in 1900. Circus World Museum collection.

Ohio, not making any real money until it played in and around Cincinnati. An additional middle piece was added to the big top and a baggage car was bought. By July the title had been changed to Sun Bros. United Shows. The first season, a dismal failure, closed on October 17 after twenty weeks on the road in Fostoria, Ohio.

The brothers borrowed enough money to pay off their performers, those that were left, and vowed to leave the circus business to the "pros." But the next spring they were back on tour again.

Few details are available in the information that I have assembled for this history on the wagon show years such as the size of the circus, number and type of wagons, kinds of performers, tents used, animals, and cities visited. Fortunately my nephew, Col. Peter Sun, located some interesting background on the wagon show years in the Hertzberg circus collection in the San Antonio, Texas Public Library. This data provided much more information than I previously had available, but there are still many gaps in details.

In 1893 the Sun brothers borrowed some money and started out again with a larger and much improved show.

The April 1, 1893 *Clipper* reported: "Sun Bros. show is fast getting in shape for the coming season. It will be a wagon show this year. Every wagon will be of platform spring type. The wagon poles and all the running gear will be painted white, with a blue stripe and red body. Even the buggies will have white running gears. The painters and wagon makers are at work. All the harness will be in nickel trimmings. The band wagon will be one of the finest ever with a show of this kind. The privileges are all let to responsible people. Prof. George Little will be band leader; Frank Ryan, boss canvas man; Charles McClintock, boss hostler; Dan Stone, boss property man; John Fery, chandelier man; Eli Green, chief cook. There will be special paper displayed. The show will be three times the size of last year's, over one hundred men, women and horses will be employed."



This item is of particular interest as 1893 was only the second year of Sun Bros. It reflects a positive "let's get on with it" attitude, which is great in view of the dismal results of their first year. The second season closed in Fairbury, Illinois. Profits allowed the purchase of new wagons.

The October 6, 1894 *Clipper* reported continued growth of the show: "This week Sun Bros. will finish the season of 1894, closing at Clayton, Michigan on October 6. The show is a four time winner." Winter quarters was on several farms and the show was to open the 1895 season in Toledo, so they probably wintered in the area.

The article continued: "The season of 1895 will prove this assertion, as every department will be enlarged and brand new. A big parade with all open cages, will be a special feature; also our museum or side show will be run next season by Sun Bros. and will be connected with the menagerie and big top, and one ticket will admit to all three canvases. Our winter quarters are all in readiness, and the show will be put away in two homes on the farm. Most all of this year's show will be sold, and work will be started at once to build new property. The season will open early in May in Toledo, Ohio."

"Peter Sun proved himself quite a fisherman, catching many black bass and sunfish at Constantine, Michigan. He brought them to the Hotel DeSun, and the boys all ate their fill of fish. Peter will visit Hot Springs, Arkansas, as soon as the show is put away. Geo. Sun is figuring on opening a first class concert or music hall in Toledo, Ohio. Gus Sun will open his big medicine company October 15, at Gibsonburg, Ohio., making one and two week stands. His company are all engaged."

In the spring of 1895 the March 9 *Clipper* noted that: "Great preparations are in progress in the Sun winter home. The World's Progressive Show will open its season true to its title. . . . Our glittering free street parade, with all open dens and two bands, with all new wardrobe will be a welcome visitor in 1895. . . . The wardrobe is being designed by Emelie Klotz, an expert in this line." Emelie, later Amelia, was the first daughter born in the Klotz family. I got to know Aunt Amelia quite well when we lived in Toledo in the 1920s and 1930s. She still lived in the old Klotz/Sun homestead on Nebraska Ave. and was a lovely woman. Also of interest was a note in the *Clipper* article that all the horses having wintered on the Ketcham Farm were in excellent shape and condi-

tion, thirty new horses being added.

A disturbance on the Sun circus lot was reported in the June 8, 1895 *Clipper*: "The Oberlin, Ohio college students, on May 27, visited Sun Bros. Circus with the intention of breaking up the show, but they were taught a lesson they will not soon forget. For weeks past the students have been preparing to give the showmen a hot reception. They had planned to cut the ropes and reduce the canvas to shreds, and they had also collected a quantity of stale eggs for the benefit of the performers. The mayor and the police tried to quiet them, but they were gayed for their pains." One of the proprietors of the show also tried to keep them quiet but they responded with cat-calls and yells.



Pony act on Sun Bros. around 1903. Circus World Museum collection.

Finally Sun Bros. called on their employees to eject the rioters. The canvas men began using their clubs and a number of students were pounded vigorously, including one who had attempted to draw a revolver.

"With the first onslaught made by the circus men most of the students fled precipitately."

The August 17, 1895 *Clipper* reported in Rays from the Sun Shows: "For the past week or two we have been steadily moving through the big Buckeye State on our triumphant way, while packed and perspiring and pushing and shoving, the crowds pack the top to the ring bank each day. At Dover, Ohio a large crowd of hoodlums threw rocks at the tent and tried to cut the guys; the canvas men rallied; HEY RUBE!, was the war cry, and well wielded stakes the remark emphasized. The toughs, dismayed by the show of resistance, drew revolvers and fled to top of the hill, but the big husky canvas men, in spite of the bullets, faked the jays right and left with a hearty good will."

One of the Sun workers waded into the midst of the battle and though hit in the forehead, stood his ground "like the boy on the burning deck," and continued to

sound the clarion war cry, "Hey Rube!" at the risk of further injury. Finally, the "rubes" disappeared with their war-like equipment of clubs, rocks and guns. By 11:30 P. M. the lot was cleared although the rioters had outnumbered Sun workers by a large majority.

Sun Bros. continued to grow and prosper during the 1895 season. A September 14, 1895 *Clipper* article noted that business had been immense all season, that receipts had doubled in size. "For the past thirty stands, the top has been packed to the ring bank, afternoon and evening. At Stafford, Ohio, a town of three hundred inhabitants, the big tent was filled at two p. m., with a surging crowd of twelve hundred people, necessitating the 'cutting out' of the tournament, as the hippodrome track was covered with perspiring humanity."

The article also noted that the show had done so well that it planned to move to railroad cars in October 1895. I found no confirmation that the show did switch to railroad transportation that early and it was still being advertised as a wagon show in 1900. The big top in 1895 was an 85 foot round top with two 40 foot middles.

At the end of the 1898 season Gus sold his interest in the circus to George and Pete. In 1899 he opened his own circus, titled Gus Sun's Brilliant Shows. The following year he placed it on rails and changed the title to Gus Sun's Railroad Shows, probably on two cars. In 1901 the show added a car. It opened the season in Ashland, Wisconsin on May 25 and headed west, making stands in Washington and Oregon. The tour closed in Rawlins, Wyoming on September 7. The April 27, 1902 *Clipper* reported the Gus show traveled on five cars.

Sun Bros. expanded its route to the East and South in the late 1890s and by 1900 it was wintering in Norfolk, Virginia. Later, winter quarters were moved to Savannah, Georgia, at least by 1905, then to Macon, Georgia in 1907. Winter quarters remained at Central Park, Macon, until the circus was sold in 1918.

"The One Real Wagon Show Of The World," was the headline of a large advertisement in the December 22, 1900 *Clipper*. The ad said that it was the "Largest, Richest, and best 25 ct. Show on Earth." It invited responses from "Ladies and Gentlemen that can do more than one act, who are willing workers and agreeable—must be sober and reliable." Also needed were a boss hostler, boss property man, four-horse drivers, bill posters, lithographers and a harness maker. Advertised for sale were advance and ticket



Sun Bros. half sheet lithograph used in 1905. Circus World Museum collection.

wagons, considerable tentage, seats and other equipment. It noted that the tents were only one year old. This is at least partial evidence that tents were replaced each year to keep the show in first class condition.

According to the November 23, 1901 *Clipper* the show had expanded with a second unit moving on two railroad cars. The original World's Progressive continued as a mud show.

The Sun brothers placed an ad in the February 22, 1902 *Clipper*: "Wanted for Sun Brothers' Two Shows. No. 1, a wagon show; No. 2, a 2 car R. R. show. Wanted a partner to handle a 2 car show, using our paper. Will sell half interest to such a person. Both shows to open in Atlanta, Georgia on April 1."

Normally there were no problems when a circus came to town. Entertainment was limited in rural areas and small towns in those days. Town people and those from the nearby countryside were glad to see the circus come, anxious in fact, and looked forward to its coming for days, sometimes weeks in advance.

But sometimes, fortunately not too often, circuses ran into difficulties in some localities. In those days, the local law enforcement officers were few in number and usually not available when trouble developed. Circuses had to rely on their own resources to handle misbehavior when it occurred. Initially, every effort was made to reason with and persuade the trouble makers to behave themselves. But, when that didn't work and serious

disturbances arose that couldn't be controlled otherwise—that's when the call "Hey Rube" was sounded. Then, immediately, all circus personnel would grab whatever weapon they could find and confront those causing the difficulty.

Tent stakes were often the weapon at hand and were formidable when wielded by a canvas man. Canvas men played a major role in these situations, but I suspect that other men, including performers such as acrobats, animal trainers and even clowns, were in good physical shape and able to hold their own under such circumstances. Circus staff and management also took part in controlling these disturbances.

Sun Bros. experienced some of these disturbances over the years. One was reported in the August 16, 1902 *Clipper*:

"Rays From Sun Bros. Progressive Shows.

"They'll eat you up in this here town,

"They'll tear your gol durned circus down,

"So spoke a man with hoary head,
The main guy winked, and simply said, 'Hey Rube' -Wm. Devere."

"The first clem of the season came with a big bluff. The bluff was called. Three physicians and a few pounds of bandages, to say nothing of large quantities of Perry Davis Pain Killer, and Lester's Star Jolly liniment, were pressed into immediate use. It happened at Murray City, Ohio. The town youths were inclined to be a little scrappy in the afternoon but nothing serious occurred. At night, the canvas was packed to the ring back, and then the trouble began. The mob began by cutting the canvas and guy ropes. The show people stalled them off the best way they could, as they were out numbered 20 to 1.

"The show was finally over and the concert finished, and the boys then felt safe." Trouble broke out again when about 150 to 200 men, some half drunk,

Sun Bros. sleepers and a stock car around 1905. Pfening Archives.

attacked the candy man and began to dismantle the candy stand, while taking all his soft drinks and popcorn. Most of the performers and musicians had left the lot. Word was quickly sent back to the gang of trouble on the lot. A long shrill whistle was sounded and was answered by the canvas men—"Hey Rube." It was echoed and re-echoed. Fifty men came tearing across the lot. Al Lynch, the circus leader, shouted "At 'em boys!" and at 'em it was. He then picked up a tent stake and felled a leader of the mob.

"The mob made a stand for a few minutes, but stakes and tailpins are great persuaders, and they finally broke and ran. Seven of the townspeople lay on the lot." The show people suffered no major injuries. The show was packed up and moved to the next town without further problems.

The article finishes, "It is dollars to doughnuts that the [trouble makers] of Murray City will in the future steer clear of Sun Bros. and their people who responded to a man to that magic word. 'Hey Rube!'"

In 1903 Sun Bros. bought its first elephant Alice, for the wagon show. George Sun was manager and Pete was general agent. Thomas Vanosten managed the two car show with Jack Bledsow as advance man.

The March 28, 1903 *Clipper* told of the second unit. It traveled through the South before closing and returning to the winter quarters in Norfolk, Virginia on March 30.

The best equipment from both shows was combined and placed on rails in 1904, probably on eight cars.

The 1904 season continued into early 1905. Performances were given in Florida towns until January 28, when a performance in Port Ritchie was cancelled because of a train wreck. The Jasper date the following day was also cancelled, which was the season's finale. The show then headed for Savannah, Georgia and winter quarters.

The tour was expanded in 1905 to additional cities in the Midwest, East, Southeast and South. The first performance of the 1905 season was given at Jessup,



Georgia on April 22. The circus then continued showing in Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Alabama. The closing was in St. Augustine, Florida on December 30. The show toured ten states and performed in 214 towns, sometimes more than once in the same town.

A 60 foot advance advertising car was added for the 1906 season. The car, which had been used previously by the Great Wallace show, brought the total to nine cars, the number used throughout the life of the show. The show opened in Savannah, Georgia and after closing went into winter quarters at Central City Park in Macon. The show continued to winter in Macon from that time until it went off the road.

The 17th season opened on April 7, 1908 in Macon. At the end of the 1908 tour the show train was in a wreck on January 5, 1909 at Lake Butler, Florida, while enroute to quarters.

Nine cars can carry a lot of equipment, tents, poles, seats, wagons, animals and of course people. Circuses as small as two cars were quite popular in the late 1890s and early 1900s. A number of circuses that started as two car shows later grew much larger and some played significant roles in circus history.

A Louisville & Nashville Railroad Company billing order dated June 23, 1909 illustrates its arrangement with Sun Bros.: "To agents. You are authorized to bill Sun Bros. Shows composed of two coaches, two stock cars, four flat cars and one advance car containing 10 people, from and to points named below. Fifty-five people to be allowed to travel with show, all in excess to pay full passenger fare.

"The show company agrees that if any of the above cars are too large to go through the tunnels of the Railroad Co., they are to be cut out and handled separately at the expense of the Show Company.

"The Railroad Company will have the option of taking the empty cars from the

Sun Bros. Circus advance car added to the show in 1906. Al Conover collection.

show points to other sidings until they are required to be returned for railroading as occasion requires.

"When cars used by the Show Company occupy the Railroad Company's tracks at any point for a longer period than twenty-four hours, storage charges will be assessed at the rate of \$1.00 per car for each twenty-four hours or fraction thereof.

"It is understood that no mileage or per diem will be allowed on cars furnished by the Show Company.

"It is agreed that the above cars shall be handled as follows: To be received empty from the E&TH RR at Mount Vernon, Indiana August 24, 1909. Leave Mount Vernon about midnight August 24 and run to Madisonville, Kentucky. Leave Madisonville about midnight August 25 and run to Providence, Kentucky. Leave Providence about midnight August 26 and run to Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Leave Hopkinsville about midnight August 27 and run to Gracey, Kentucky, there to be delivered loaded to connecting line.

"The Railroad Company will charge for the above service the following amounts, payments to be made to the Agents of the Railroad Company at the points named below before movement of the show train." Each agent was to be paid \$180.00.

A reader in the Lebanon (Ohio) *Patriot* told of the show to playing there on May 21, 1909. It read in part: "The main top program is styled as a 'triumph of arenic marvels,' and includes among the list of participants such distinguished names as the LaPasque Troupe, a company of novel templin triple bar performers, who are said to be the very greatest of their class extant. The others are the Avallon Troupe, a trio of high-wire marvels; the Lipsley trio, sensational aerialists and



Hired local wagon with paste bucket ready to bill country routes. The advertising car is in background. Pfening Archives.

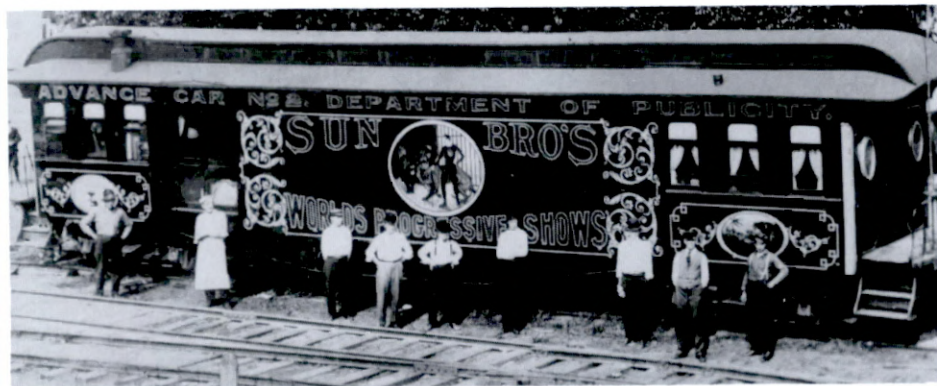
unique casting expositors; Francis Boyle and Company (4 people), in a spectacular novelty, entitled 'Clubdom' and 'Hoopland,' in which they introduce a remarkable display of ambidexterity and feats of juggling.

"As in all past seasons, in fact since the inception of the show, there are no off-color issues, gamblers and ticket scalpers allowed to trail in the wake of the aggregation, nor is this despicable class permitted to get near the show or its exhibition grounds. A trio of special detectives constantly travel with the show to assist the local officers and authorities in preserving order, and also to assist in looking after the wants of their patrons."

In 1910 Sun Bros. Circus had a 110 foot big top with two forty and two thirty foot middles. Feature acts performed in the center ring, with some acts performing at either end. All canvas was new at the beginning of the season and the show made a good appearance on the lot.

The show had a good variety of animals, including about 50 horses, a \$20,000 troupe of elephants performed by Cheerful Gardner, camels, lions, tigers, monkeys and others. Gardner, dad's elephant trainer for many years, later went with the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. I had the pleasure of meeting him with Dad when it showed in Toledo one year. He was an outstanding elephant trainer and a very nice person.

Charles Duble's article in the November-December 1953 *White Tops* also provides insight into performers with Sun Bros. during the 1910 season. Duble was a member of Charles Gerlach's Sun Bros. band. Gerlach had been with the Sun show since 1907, then in 1911, along with Duble, joined the John Robinson's 10 Big Shows.





Sun Bros. Circus big top, marquee and ticket wagon around 1910. Al Conover collection.

Billy O'Dale, in 1910, was the principal equestrian who did his somersault, riding to the strains of *Complacent Quadrille*. The Cevene troupe of three did a tight wire act. Fred Kenno was a producing clown and sang a song, *I'm a Crazy Jay on a Circus Day*. Other clowns were Billy Reid, McAllister, Stoddard and Wallace.

The six Waltons did a tumbling act, and statuary display, Wiley Ferris and his son Junior appeared in a balancing perch act to the strains of an old circus favorite, *The Coconut Dance*. Ferris was also a foot juggler with a barrel, cross and other objects.

Otto Weaver was a trapeze performer doing head balancing and his wife Jessie was a slack-wire performer. Weaver was still with the Sun show during the 1914 season. Ruby and Pearl Clark did aerial acts and swinging perch. Billy Conners did the revolving ladder, Charlie Hildera was a contortionist and Eileen Sun (daughter of George Sun) was a juvenile pony rider. The Wenzell Sisters performed on the trapeze, and also rode menage horses along with the Clark Sisters. Capt. Cardona presented the two elephants.

According to Duble, an old style after-show concert was in vogue at that date. The Great Boyd sang a song in costume as a female impersonator. Boyd, still with Sun Bros. in 1913, was shown on a full page in that year's route book. Other after-show performances included Ferris Jr. and Ruby Clark singing *Down by the Watermelon Vine* and Billy Reid and Fred Kenno as Dutch comedians. Uncle Rastus closed the show as a buck and wing dancer.

The side show had eight double deck banners with the wording "A Giant Galaxy of Creations Climax Marvels." Dave Gillespie, side show manager, also did his Punch

and Judy act; his wife was snake enchantress; Decker was a comedy juggler and Capt. John Cardona worked a large lion in a den. W. J. Daplyn, an Englishman, did magic and the side show openings. The menagerie was also in the side show, and included two elephants, Etta and Alice, two large camels, one water buffalo, a lion

den and two smaller cages.

Duble said that the Sun show did not have the customary black side show band. Just before the opening of the side show, the big show band would play one march, *Masked Battery*, out front. After the opening, the band would play another march, *Belford's Carnival*, before departing for the big top. Then a black man called "Alabam" would crank an ancient roll-ban organ, grinding out old German tunes to provide music for the side show. Admission to the side show was 10 cents, "stay as long as you please."

The Sun Bros. Circus had integrity. Nothing dishonest was tolerated, and there were no con men, which were common on some circus grounds in those days. George Sun was said to be a real stickler for this strict moral philosophy.

Parades were a popular feature of circuses in the 1890s and early 1900s. For many years Sun Bros. paraded, but by the 1910 season it had been discontinued. Instead at 12:30 P. M. daily there was a free exhibition in which Boche, Champion Ski Jumper of Canada, slid down an incline, landing in a net. Lithos were displayed in windows calling attention to the free performance. It was also mentioned in newspaper advertising.

Historian Joe McKennon remembers the Sun show playing his home town of Paris, Tennessee. When the town folk assembled to see the parade they were notified by a show employee that: "due to

Bannerline of the Sun Bros. combination side show and menagerie in 1911. Pfening Archives.



THE 17th ANNUAL TOUR

SUN BROTHERS

GREATER PROGRESSIVE SHOWS

A 1909 CLODBURST OF AMUSEMENT TRIUMPHS
NEW AGES—NEW ANIMALS—NEW FEATURES—NEW SENSATIONS
NEWEST OF EVERYTHING FOR THIS YEAR
A VANTAGE WITH THE OLD—HAIL TO THE NEW

A Veritable Magic Traveling City of Climax Capping Marvels of Splendors
AMAZING • THRILLING • DELIGHTFUL • ENTERTAINING
NOTHING BETTER IN THE WAY OF HIGH CLASS AND REFINED THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS WILL APPEAR HERE THIS SEASON
THE SUN BROTHERS' SHOWS

200 PERFORMERS BOTH HUMAN AND ANIMAL, THE DEIGHTFUL CHAMPIONS EVERYWHERE
200 FINEST HORSES AND PONIES EVER EXHIBITED. A GLORIOUS BLUE RIBBON HORSE THE "MIGHTY OF THEM ALL"

FREE 41730 P. M. IN THE SHOW GROUNDS
A LULL OF SENSATIONAL
GRIEVOUS NOVEL ACTS WITH
ALL THE COMFORT AND SOOTHING OF A REHEARSAL
DURING THE CHILDREN

2 GRAND AND COMPLETE PERFORMANCES 2
EACH DAY AT 7 AND 9 P. M.
DOORS OPEN 6:30. RAILROAD
FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE PUBLIC

THE DATE ONCE NAMED IS NEVER CHANGED

STATESBORO, SAT. DEC. 4

Sun Bros. herald used in 1909. Pfening Archives.

the late arrival of the train a parade will not be given, proceed directly to the show grounds to see the free act."

After Sun Bros. discontinued its parade it continued to take a bandwagon down town as a bally. But this was also eventually discontinued. An advertisement in the April 1, 1911 *Billboard* offered a 56 foot sleeper, a bandwagon and two cages for sale.

Two important events of circus day were unloading of the railroad cars and erection of the tents. These were looked forward to and watched by the local townspeople, especially the younger ones. Horses were normally used for unloading and moving the wagons, including the large heavy pole wagons. Certain times, however, if the weather had been rainy and the lot muddy, elephants were used to move the larger and heavier wagons through the mire and mud. They did the job very well.

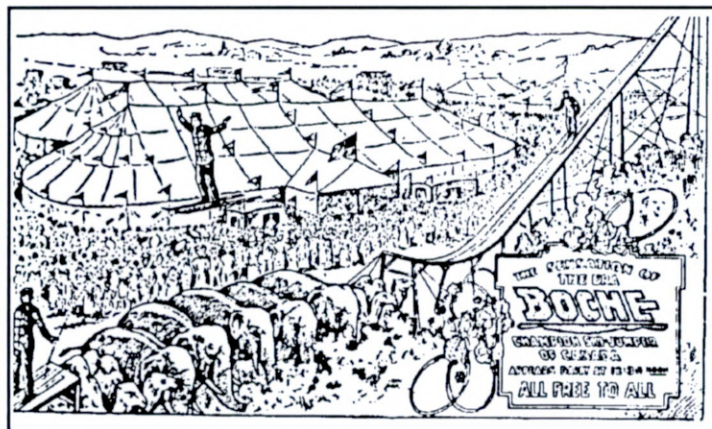
Erection of tents was another circus day ritual watched by the local townspeople. I had an opportunity to see the tent raised a few times and it was well worth watching. Pounding of tent stakes was one of the most interesting parts. The stakes were used to secure ropes which were fastened to the tent poles to support or guy them in place. A crew, mostly blacks, would work together pounding the stakes into the ground sequentially. As I recall, they sounded off as they pounded, something like the cadence of marching sol-

be I will not be in the circus business next season as the game is getting too hard as the people in general fight the shows and make it hard for them to make a living and prospects are we will sell the show as brother George wants to retire and wants to let me have the show alone but I don't care to handle same alone. We expect to winter again at Macon, Georgia, the best winter quarters we ever had and a fine town to winter."

Plans to sell shares in the circus were made in the fall of 1910. A prospectus for private placement of shares read in part: "A company is being formed to take



Pete Sun in the vestibule of the advance car in 1911. Albert Conover collection.



Boche, the free act, was pictured in 1909 newspaper ads. Pfening Archives.

diers: one-two-three-four-sound off. The crew seemed to enjoy vocalizing as they pounded.

Initially, as the circus grew in the mid-1890s and early 1900s, George was the manager and Pete the general agent. Then, Pete began to take over more of the overall management responsibilities as George's health was a continuing and growing problem. This led to George's decision to sell his interest in the circus.

James M. Beach, who had been manager of the advance car, and later special agent, was promoted to general agent when Pete became general manager.

In a letter to Charles Bernard dated August 18, 1910 Pete wrote: "My plans have changed since I last saw you. I am now married and living in Cincinnati, Ohio and married a Cincinnati lady and it may

over the plant, right, title and interest of Sun Bros. World's Progressive Shows, heretofore and now operating as a partnership between George Sun and Pete Sun, the purpose being the enlargement, improvement and operation of the show.

"The show is now completing the nineteenth year of its existence. For twelve years it was an overland wagon show, and since 1904 a nine car railroad show, and from its inception the enterprise has been a consistent annual earner.

"The plant, as it now stands, consists of one car in advance, two sleeping cars, two stock cars and four flat cars with the

show. The menagerie consists of two elephants, three lions, a leopard, a hyena, four camels, a zebu, and a number of monkeys. There are fifty head of ring and baggage horses, all first class stock and full equipment of tents, seats, lighting apparatus, cages, baggage wagons, harness, wardrobe, and all the miscellaneous paraphernalia necessary to conduct the business.

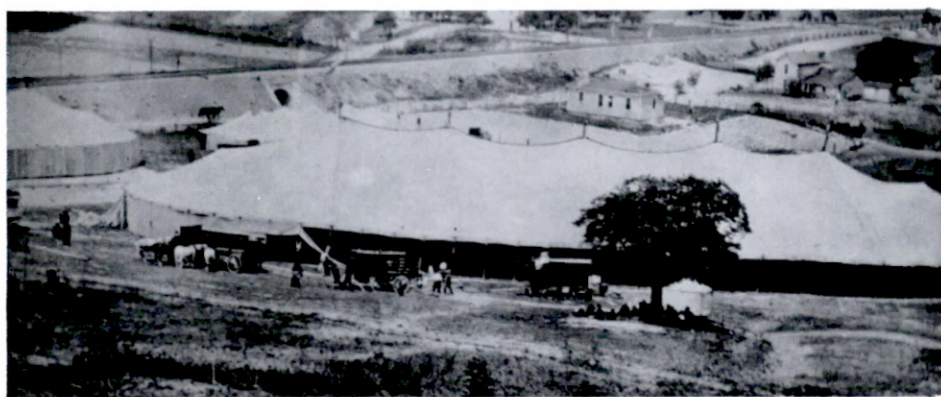
"The actual cash value of the show as it now stands is \$50,000, divided as follows: Train \$10,000; wagons and cages, \$6,000; Horses, \$10,000; Animals, \$10,000; Miscellaneous, tents, etc., \$4,000 and Title and goodwill \$10,000.

"The foregoing figures are not based on earning power, but are a conservative cash valuation of the property as it stands, and in fact are less than it would cost to organize and equip, at present market prices, a show of equal size and quality and place it on the road ready for business.

"The books, which are open to the inspection of any interested investor, will

Large Sun Bros. billboard in Tell City, Indiana in 1911. Author's collection.





show that for the entire period of its existence as a railroad show, the net earnings have not been less than \$12,000 in any year, and have gone as high as \$30,000 in one year. It will therefore be seen that the business has paid as high as sixty percent of the estimated value of the property in its best years, and not less than practically forty percent in the worst business seasons in its history as a railroad show.

"It is now proposed to capitalize the show at \$100,000, the stock to be divided into one hundred shares at a par value of \$1,000 per share.

"The present owners, George and Peter Sun, will subscribe jointly for \$50,000 of the stock, in consideration of which they will convey to the new company the present plant, title and good will, at the conclusion of the present season of 1910, which will be about the middle of December, when the show returns to its winter quarters at Macon, Georgia. George and Peter Sun will also subscribe for an additional \$10,000 worth of stock, and the cash to cover this \$10,000 is now on deposit at the Fourth National Bank, Macon, Georgia. The remaining \$40,000 is open for subscription.

"Plans have been formed to enlarge the show in every department, by adding new cars to the present train, new cages and wagons to increase the present number, add a number of animals in the menagerie and make numerous additions and improvements that will enable the management to take the show into larger centers of population and attract the attention of greater numbers of people than the present small show can draw."

It is not known if they sold any shares, but it appears they didn't.

Anticipating George's retirement from the show the company was incorporated

The five pole Sun Bros. big top in 1912. Albert Conover collection.

in the state of Georgia on February 28, 1912. The Macon newspaper noted: "The Sun Brothers will be henceforth be a Georgia corporation. They have applied to the superior court of Bibb county for a charter. George Sun, Pete Sun and Jesse Harris have filed an application for a charter, with incorporation at \$50,000, all stock fully paid in." From that point on the official name was Sun Bros. World's Progressive shows Inc. The "Inc." was even added to the couriers.

In 1912 George sold his interest to Pete and moved his family to Hot Springs, Arkansas for health reasons. Pete continued as owner-manager of the show, with Gus participating as part owner.

A contract between Sun Bros. Shows and the city of Barnesville, Georgia illustrates an unusual booking for the show in 1912. Dated March 18 it read: "This contract entered into this 18th day of March, 1912, by the city of Barnesville, Georgia, of the first part, and Sun Brothers Shows of the second part.

"That parties of the first part agrees lot,

Sun Bros. elephants Etta and Alice around 1910. Bill Embrey is at right with cane. Circus World Museum collection.



all licenses, water, billboards and newspaper space to parties of the second part.

"Parties of the second part agree to furnish their shows complete and give two performances on Monday April 8, 1912. Parties of the second part are to receive the first \$600.00 for their expense, and after the first \$600.00 parties of the first part are to share one half of all receipts including the big show, family show, theater, concert show and reserve seats.

"Parties of the first part, are not to be held responsible in case of the receipts do not amount to \$600.00, but parties of the second part take whatever the amount is toward their expenses.

"Complimentary tickets for advertising and newspapers are to be mutually agreed upon.

"Tickets to be furnished to parties of the first part by parties of the second part, and settlement to be made at 8 P. M. on Monday, April the 8th, by the committee of the first part.

"Parties of the first part are to furnish ticket takers and also sell tickets in advance of the show." The type written contract was signed by J. A. Dallin, Mayor of Barnesville and Pete Sun.

The 1912 season was the longest in the history of the show. Opening on April 6 in Macon the Sun Bros. traveled 11,511 miles playing 238 towns in 12 states before closing in White Springs, Florida on January 11, 1913.

I remember dad telling me that Sun Bros. was the first circus to play Key West, Florida. The show was there December 30 & 31, 1912.

The staff in 1912 included George Sun, manager; Peter Sun general agent; Herman Griggs, equestrian director; Bobby Fountain, side show manager; Oscar Rogers, privileges boss; Cheerful Gardner, menagerie superintendent; Henry Welsh, boss hostler; and William Randolph, ring stock superintendent. Randolph died at age 78, in Cincinnati, Ohio on October 12, 1912. He had been with the show for seventeen years. John Shelly was bandmaster with fifteen musicians.

A route book was issued following the 1913 tour. Pete and Gus Sun were listed as managing directors and Pete as acting manager.

The staff included Clinton Newton, business manager; William Walle, equestrian director; Marvin Arnold, annex manager; W. C. Dean bandmaster; Fred Lange, trainmaster; John C. Parker, steward; Omar Keathley, property boss; P. A. Klotz, (sic) general agent; Ray Piper and James M.

Beach, contracting agents; J. L. Springer, advance car manager; John James, big top canvas boss; and J. B. King boss hostler.

Circuses learned early and well that the size of the crowd on circus day depended heavily on advance preparation, with emphasis on advertising. The show put much effort into making sure that towns and the surrounding countryside were well informed as to the day the circus would be there. They were also informed as to what outstanding performances they could look forward to seeing.

The advance advertising car served the purpose its name implies, to get the word out. In 1912 J. L. Springer was car manager with a crew of a paste maker, a chef, one lithographer, one banner tacker and nine bill posters. The advance crew slept and ate on the car. It served as a working headquarters and living quarters for the advance crew. Traveling two weeks ahead of the show, the car was attached to regular scheduled passenger trains.

In addition, the advance agent was responsible for all local arrangements, including lot rental, licenses and permits, supplies and local help, and for rail transportation.

Advertising was done mostly by lithographs and handbills. Lithos were bill posted in the best spots available and ranged in size from half sheets [21 by 28 inches] to 80 sheets [9 by 70 feet].

There was great competition for bill posting space. Sometimes one circus' advance car crew would tear down or cover another circus' billing and put up their own. Bill posting probably reached a new height, literally, in Shelbyville, Kentucky in 1911, with the posting of Sun Bros. posters around the clock tower of the Court House. The Sun show was scheduled to show in Shelbyville on September 1 and Famous Robinson on September 5, 1911.

Sun lithos were posted on the top of the courthouse clock tower to make sure they would be seen by all the locals. This competition was won by default as the Robinson show folded in Morgantown, Kentucky on August 31.

The advance car also distributed multi-colored couriers to illustrate and describe the spectacular features of the coming circus. Sun Bros. had one of these booklets containing eight pages exclaiming its features.

The 1913 season opened in Macon, Georgia on March 31 and closed on January 1, 1914 in St. Augustine, Florida. The total mileage was 10,665 miles. Two hundred and thirty-eight towns were played in twelve states.

It was traditional for special meals to be served on circus advance cars on holidays. Such was the case on Thanksgiving November 27, 1913 when the Sun Bros.

car was in Jasper, Florida. Chef George Becker served the crew of fifteen a dinner consisting of oyster cocktail, green turtle soup, cream of tomato soup, broiled shad roe with tomato sauce, roast turkey, chestnut dressing, cranberry sauce, braised leg of lamb with mint sauce, baked potatoes, candied yams, creamed asparagus tips, baked squash, waldorf salad, hot mince pie with brandy sauce, Thanksgiving pudding, chocolate ice cream, lady cake, coffee, tea, coca, lemonade, Havana cigars and Turkish cigarettes. A printed menu was issued to commemorate the occasion.

A press sheet issued for the 1914 season listed favorable after-notice comments from towns played in 1913. Here are a few of them: "The performance this year was better than ever before. Nothing too good can be said of Sun Bros. Shows or its management. Everybody in Warren County is a friend to Sun Bros. Shows, and all will hail with delight the announcement of a return engagement next season."-*The Times*, McMinnville, Tennessee, April, 18, 1913.

"Sun Bros. Circus, which exhibited in this city last Friday, is without a doubt one of the cleanest and best travelling shows on the road. The acts being superior to anything that has ever been witnessed here before."-*The Herald Times*, West Branch, Michigan, July, 10, 1913.

"Sun Bros. Circus played to two big houses at Cynthiana Tuesday. The performance was bright, fresh and clean, and delighted the crowds. There were no objectionable features whatever, and the management was in capable hands. The



The Shelbyville, Kentucky courthouse plastered with Sun Bros. billing in 1911. Albert Conover collection.

show has been on the road for twenty-two years, and the fact that it can successfully repeat in practically the same territory year after year speaks much in its behalf."-*The Democrat*, Cynthiana, Kentucky, August 28, 1913.

"The Sun Bros. Show, gave an exhibition in this city last Friday, to one of the largest and most appreciative audiences in the history of Jackson and Breathitt County. The show has many new and commendable features. The show is also distinctly moral in every respect. Their coming again will be hailed with delight by the lovers of a clean show and those wishing a fair deal."-*The Times*, Jackson, Kentucky, September 5, 1913.

"Sun Bros. Show, made a favorable im-

Sun Bros. Circus lot scene around 1913. Circus World Museum collection.



pression upon our people. Their show was entirely free from grafters and skin games and their performers were of the best. We like to see good clean shows, and for this reason, hope that Sun Bros. will visit us next year."—*Star Ledger*, Kosciusko, Mississippi, October 31, 1913.

"Sun Bros. exhibited their shows in this city Thursday afternoon and night, to large and representative audiences. This is one of the best shows seen here, clean, legitimate and your money's worth. Sun Brothers have been in the show business twenty-two years; have shown here several times during that period and can always come back."—*Sea Coast Echo*, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, November, 15, 1913.

New cages were ordered from H. L. Witt & Sons of Morristown, Tennessee for the 1914 season. A new 110 foot big top with two 40s and one 38 middle came from Thompson and Vandiver Tents in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The April 4, 1914 *Billboard* reported: "Sun Bros. will open their season on March 28 after being in quarters for twelve weeks, repairing and painting. Some new canvas, new cages and new wardrobe have been added.

"W. F. Wallet will be equestrian director. Marvin Arnold and wife will handle the Family Theater, and will have John Cardona, untamable lion act; Herr Roberts, boxing kangaroo; Kramer, juggling Dello; Punch and Judy; the Flying Lady and a musical act.

"Rawlston Case will be band leader and will have fourteen musicians."

The April 25, 1914 *Billboard* reported the opening: "Sun Bros. Circus opened its twenty-fifth season at Macon, Georgia on March 28. The show this year, as in 1913, is under the personal direction of Pete



Color cover of 1914 Sun Bros. courier. Pfening Archives.

Sun, who has every department well organized.

"The only circumstance that served to mar the opening was the fact that Clinton Newton, who for nine years has been press representative and front door man, was not in his accustomed place. Mr. Newton has been ill since the closing of the last season, and while the opening performance was being given he was in the Williams Sanitarium. He expected to join the second week. But this was not to be as it was found necessary to amputate

A feed and watering stop of the Sun show in 1915. The show train is in the background. Pfening Archives.

his left foot shortly after the show left Macon.

"Sun Bros. is larger and better in everyformance is given better satisfaction, as is respect than in past years. The per evidenced by the attendance figures, which show an increase in the night business over that in the same towns on previous visits.

"Among the performers who have parts in the big program of twenty-five numbers are: the Eight Wallets, William, Rose and six children, in riding acts and wire and trapeze novelties; Five Belfords, acrobats; Tan Araki troupe of four, in a combination of aerial and trapeze work, barrel juggling and strong jaw and iron jaw balancing; Si Kitchie, head balancer; De Zorans, aerialists; Otto Weaver, pedestal evolutions, & canine marvel 'Dot,' the Goetzts, jugglers; Three Eidons, riders and the Jacobs Duo.

"The Sun Bros. \$20,000 troupe of elephants worked by Cheerful Gardner, and the trained dogs and ponies are also a big feature. The clowns are more numerous than ever, and include G. W. McIntosh & wife. Bill Farmer, Jackie Cohen, A. C. Kramer, James Gibbons, E. L. Miller, Homer Todd, Sara Musher, Eddie Moore, Tom Galvin and Paul Sentell. Another novelty is the opening of the show with a song by Harriet Rickey.

"Marvin Arnold is in his second season, in charge of the side show, and in addition to the trained animals, has six novelties."

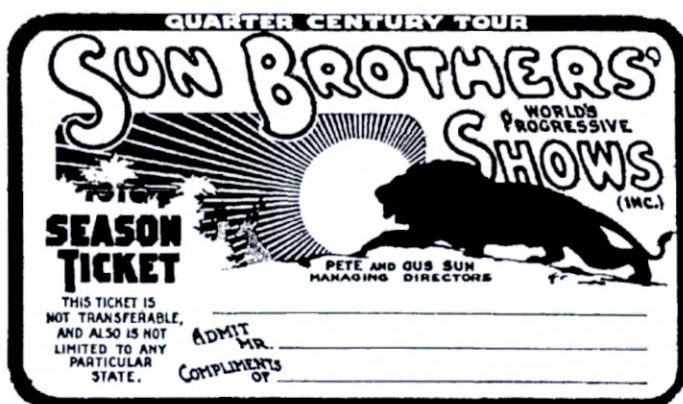
As the show moved north, Cleveland and Athens, Tennessee were lost due to floods on April 8 and 9. The towns were re-scheduled for October 19 and 20.

At Madisonville, Tennessee on April 10 Cheerful Gardner received a note from a performer who was serving eight months



in the county jail there with another carnival attache for an alleged burglary. Mr. Sun obtained details of the case from the sheriff, and arranged with that official to have two deputies bring the two prisoners to the show that afternoon. The boys were profuse in their thanks. A petition for their pardon was signed by nearly all the officials concerned with the case. Nice ending.

After operating the show by himself following George's retirement Pete Sun began thinking about selling the business. On November 21, 1914 he wrote to William P. Hall: "The reason I want to sell is that I want to retire from show business. I am now getting show ready for next season as I will work until the day I can sell same. Running the show as long as I am connected with same for the success you know what others have done this season. If interested I [will] show what we done on the season as I turn routes and other matters over to a buyer. I am working now as if I did not want to sell. If you are in the market this will be a good show to invest in. We have 9 cars in first class shape, cost 15/000/00 and would sell easy at 10/000/00 Dollars. Good shape performers sleeper worth 2/500/00 as good as a new car. Elephants best in the business and finest act you ever saw and fine shape as a Vaudeville act worth 10/000/00 Dollars. They cost us 5/000/00 untrained and have 10 weeks at good money for them this winter if I want to send them out. We have other animals. One lion, fine big; one leopard; cage of monkeys, sacred ox; one double hump camel; three single hump dromedaries; cage deer; two seals; boxing kangaroo. Elephants are worth 3/000/00 Dollars. Have three ponies, a 4 horse carrying act, a principal horse, fine menage horse and one hurdle mule. Ring stock worth 2/000/00. One new ticket wagon, cost 1/000/00 Dollars. Five new cages built last winter, cost 2/000/00. Baggage wagons in good shape and right kind of wagons. Eleven baggage wagons were built in Macon, Ga cost us 300/00 to build and the



Sun Bros. season pass issued in 1916. Pfening Archives.

wagon builders want 450/00 for same kind worth 3/000/00. The other outfit, tents, poles, Bolte and Weyer lights, first class. Seats, cookhouse outfit and advance stuff and in fact best equipped show on the road for its size today. All other property worth right now as it is 10/000/00 Dollars. Show will list for over 40/000/00 Dollars if built new. Could not be bought for that. I will take 25/000/00 for the property FOB on the cars at Macon, Ga. on morning of Dec. 1 at Montezuma, Ga. on our closing stand. Advance car now in Macon and will say that I can show you figures this season as tough as it was. Worth looking at and if interested you can come on. Will say if you have never saw our outfit it is OK first class and horses and paraphernalia first class and in good shape. Animal cages and ticket wagon need nothing, are like New. In fact show will need very little repair this winter. I will winter in Macon, but have reasons to retire and will show purchaser same when buying and will enclose route of the show to close. We had a very cold week and bad weather this week as low as 10 above, but have missed one performance. It snowed on us at Gadsden. Night show lost. We will show a profit this week in all the bad weather."

Pete was unsuccessful in enticing Hall

The Sun Bros. train in Fleming, Kentucky on May 28, 1918. Pfening Archives.

or anyone else to buy the show.

The 1914 season closed in Cairo, Georgia on November 28. The show played 210 stands in twelve states.

In 1915 Sun Bros. went by ferry boat from St. Ignace to Sault Ste. Marie in Michigan's Upper Peninsula according to *The Circus Moves by Rail*. This may well have been the first showing of a circus in that area.

Pete Sun wrote his brother George on February 10, 1916: "I have a party named Hiskins booked in Beach's place [as general agent]. Beach goes to Sparks and he has most of my advance of last season. He is now trying to get ahead of me trying to get Logan [West Virginia] on April 15. He sure likes me. I wrote him a nice letter and tried to be friendly with him. He never answered. I hoped he would not try and make me change to keep him out. I will do the best I can like you say, work year round. But then I like work as if I were single. I would not want anything better, but I love my family better than I love the show. That is why I want to get out. Oscar Rogers is now owner of 30 shares of the stock. Will try and get someone in advance to take 30 shares and then also be able to stay home if I can't run that way I will try and sell in another year or so as I feel I want to be home.

"I am taking a mortgage or two, about 40,000, so I will have some money tied up I can't get and have it earn me little more than 3 percent. Last year I made about enough to live on from percent in the bank and was much pleased that I was able to do that.

"I leave tonight. Oscar will be in charge and he will be assistant manager this season. We have a good show booked Troupe Seals Betts. 5 of them, very good; ponies, monkeys, dogs, mule; big act Tereilles, 5 Cubans; 4 Japs; traps, wire and other single acts. Have 8 clowns and a band of 15 pieces. Will have a pleasing show that will cost over 600 [a day]."





Sun Bros. baggage wagons parked at the Macon, Georgia winter quarters. Author's collection.

The 1916 season opened on March 30 in Macon. The show moved north quickly and was in Elkhorn City, Kentucky on April 28. Sun Bros. entered Michigan at Morenci on June 19 and remained in that state until August 10. The fall was spent in the south in Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia. On December 6 the show entered Florida at Jasper. The closing stand was in Hastings, Florida on January 6, 1917. The circus played 242 stands in twelve states.

The war year of 1917 presented many problems for shows traveling by rail. New difficulties in operating his circus caused Pete Sun to again think about retiring. The October 27, 1917 *Billboard* contained an ad offering Sun Bros. Circus for sale. It found no buyers.

The 1918 season was difficult for circuses. There was a serious question if show trains would be allowed to operate. The February 9, 1918 *Billboard* reported, doubtless to the relief of showmen, that William G. McAdoo, director-general of railroads, had announced from his office in the Interstate Commerce Commission that there would be no special restrictions against circuses and carnivals. Transportation of war materials were, however, to be given preference.

The turn of the year quickly brought trouble to Sun Bros. Circus. Central City Park in Macon was hit by a strong tornado on January 4. Damage to the Georgia State Fair Association was estimated at over \$40,000. The race track, grandstand, cattle sheds and the brick machinery hall in the fair grounds (Central City Park) were affected by the blow. The Sun show's loss ran into several thousand dollars.

All of the circus animals were quartered in Machinery Hall, which was one of the first buildings to feel the effects the storm. Two monkeys and a wild cat were

killed as was Etta, one of the show's two elephants. Dad said she died in his arms. One kangaroo was injured and escaped, but was captured the next day. A cage of lions was killed with the exception of one beast. Two circus workers were in the building when it was crushed and were

Newspaper ad for the opening stand of the 1918 season. Pfening Archives.

Central City Park

(Macon.)

2—JOYOUSLY, JOLLY JINGLING DAYS.

April 9th and 10th

AMERICA
Still Acclaims this the Good Old Standby.

ALL NEW BIG

SHOWS

101—European and American Performers, mostly GIRLS.

100—Star Trained Animals.

3—BANDS OF MUSIC.

24—HYSTERICALLY FUNNY CLOWNS.

The ORIGINAL SEAL BAND, from Alaska.

A Real Show of all LAUGHS—THRILLS and DAZZLING SPLENDORS

2—Performances Daily. Matinee at 2:15 P. M. Nightly at 8:15. Doors open one hour earlier.

Trains from CAMP WHEELER will stop at Main Entrance to Show.

covered with bricks and timbers. Other show equipment was undamaged.

Pete Sun, having offered his show for sale in October 1917, had been undecided about taking it on the road in 1918. He had not contracted any performers or staff. After learning that there would be no problems in moving the show he decided to make the 1918 tour.

Sun placed an ad in the February 23 *Billboard* wanting a general agent, a local contractor, an advance car manager, billers, big show acts, a band leader, a boss hostler, and a train master. The ad also said the show wanted to buy a 70 foot round top with two 30 foot middles, a 30 x 60 horse tent, a stake driver and a 72 foot sleeper and manage horses and animals acts.

The March 2 *Billboard* contained the first word of activities in Macon: "The Sun Bros. Circus has been at work since the show entered the shops in January and great results have followed.

"The customary balmy weather is in evidence in Macon—these sunshiny days are bringing great crowds out to have a look at the animals in the zoo department. This part of the show has also been added to during the winter. The ring barn in the new brick amphitheater building is a scene of activity. Here the various animal acts, horse displays and pony entrees are being put through their exploits. In the gymnasium building the Morales Troupe, the Niblo Sisters, Billy Niblo, Miss Ashton and Dick Ashton are limbering up daily.

"The annex and supplementary shows will be conducted on very elaborate lines. They will be under the management or George Oram."

The April 13 *Billboard* reported: "The stage is all set for the opening of the season of the World's Progressive. The date is April 9 and 10. Rehearsals are now in full swing.

"Car manager Tom Dransfield and his crew of advertisers have billed the town and surrounding country in excellent shape."

The April 20 *Billboard* covered the opening of the show: "The weather man said 'Fair and warmer Tuesday.' He struck it right, for bright and early at Macon, Georgia, the Sun show forces were regaled with atmospheric conditions that fairly breathed of true Dixie traditions. The magnificent weather together with the excellent publicity that the show received in advance, brought out good sized crowds for the opening Tuesday afternoon April 9.

"The customary street parade was dispensed with, the show following its established rule of entirely eliminating the pageantry. Instead of this traditional feature a number of high-class free attrac-

tions were given on the show grounds at the noon hour, just previous to throwing open the doors of the annex and supplementary shows. A troupe of full-blooded Indians are a big feature in the outdoor free offerings. They present a number of war dances and lariat rope exercises. Master Niblo presented a thrilling teeth descent, and Barry Green, an adept grotesque juggler of big objects, was the other free feature. George Oram is director of this department and makes the opening oratory.

"The annex has the following entertainers: Mlle. Nellie King Oram feature musical artiste, including a novel unafon display; Chief Snow-In-The-Face and Sons, in novel Indian specialties; Captain Cardona, strong untamable lion act; Cheewa and his boxing kangaroo; Chevalier Boulle, French tattooed marvel; Prof. J. J. Vox, military ventriloquist; Helena Ashby, physical culture girl; and Prof. Alex Jackson's Original Mobile Ragtime Jazz Band, including a quartet of singing and dancing comedians.

"The big top performance this season is a standard one. It shows that great care has been taken in selecting acts of merit and real drawing qualities. The following people appeared at the opening: Captain C. H. Betts and trained seals, an outstanding feature act greatly augmented since last season; the Powell Troupe (seven people) in a feature aerial act and somersaulting. The Morales Cuban Troupe (seven people) in a feature aerial act and a diversity of novelties. Fred and Marguerite Crandell, society equestrians appear in a number of new equestrian specialties which have the earmarks of class and distinction. They also display much new and stunning costumery. The Japanese performers present a number of very attractive specialties. The Niblo Troupe, four people, featuring Miss Billie Niblo, is a novel equilbristic act. Senorita Morales is featured in a really wonderful single tight wire act.

"Felix Morales gives a thrilling head slide. Numerous attractive trained animal acts, ponies, dogs, cakewalking horses, educated baboons, and a giant performing elephant, are distributed throughout the program.

"The clown college is a prominent feature, with Austin King and Bill Koplin as principals. Others are 'Doc' Hastings, Slivers Johnson, Charles Nelson, Abe Goldstein, Billy Niblo, Billy Howard Lee and Hap Snelbaker."

The staff in 1918 included Peter Sun,



The Sun Bros. lot in Fleming, Kentucky in 1918. Pfening Archives.

manager; Oscar Rogers, assistant manager; J. J. Nixon, treasurer; Pete Sun, general agent and railroad contractor; Sam Shelby, contracting press agent; Herbert Cohen, press agent back on show; Clinton Newton, equestrian director and legal adjuster; John James, boss canvasman; Bob Adams, boss hostler; and John Cardona, superintendent of animals.

The 1918 route took the show through Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana. The season closed with a six day engagement, starting October 14, at the

Cover of newspaper courier used by Sun Bros. Circus during its final season of 1918. Pfening Archives.



Southwestern Fair in Atlanta Georgia.

A quarantine caused by an epidemic of Spanish influenza forced a number of shows to close early in 1918. Sun Bros. was not allowed to leave Atlanta. The Ringling and Barnum shows closed on October 8 and were both shipped to the Barnum winter quarters in Bridgeport, Connecticut. The John Robinson show had been shut out of Norfolk, Virginia.

This was the last straw for Pete Sun. At age 46, after twenty-seven years on the road, he announced he was

selling his circus.

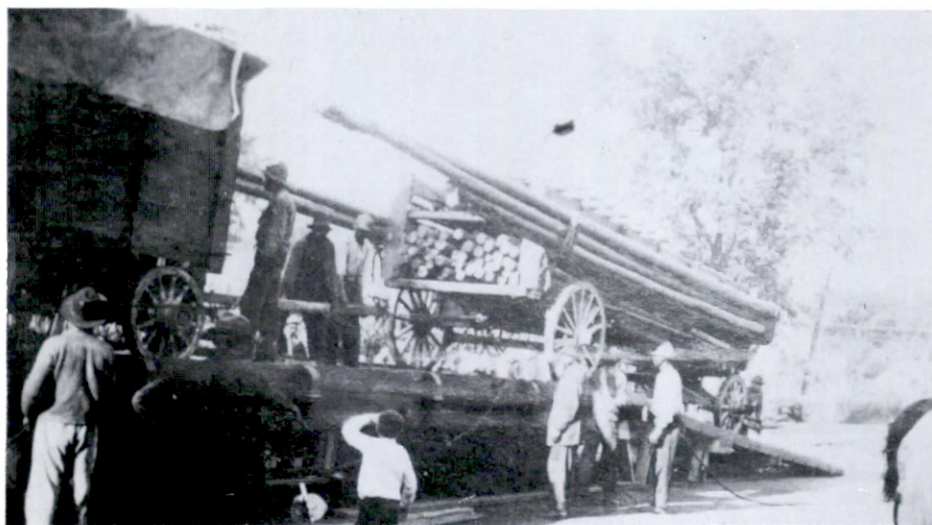
The November 9 *Billboard* told the story: "Sun Bros. Show, founded 27 years ago by the Sun Brothers, and built up from a small outfit to one of the most successful and best known circuses of its size in the business, has played its last performance under Sun Bros. management and the entire outfit is now being sold at the fair grounds in Atlanta by manager Pete Sun.

"The Sun Bros. Shows is said to bear the unique distinction of never having had a losing season. Throughout the South and East particularly it is well known in the smaller towns as a show that always gave what it advertised, and the management built up an excellent reputation for square dealing and cleanliness. The title is generally considered by circus men as about the best in the business for a small show.

"Mr. Sun is selling the property piece by piece but would not, of course, refuse a reasonable offer for the show in its entirety. Some excellent equipment is offered, including tents, cars, wagons, cages, etc., as well as the animals and horses.

"After the show property is disposed of Pete Sun will return to his home in Cincinnati."

The same issue contained a sale advertisement. The inventory of the show illustrates how much circus can be packed on four flat cars. The ad read: "For sale. Sun Brothers Circus. I will sell show complete if sold in next few days, not holding same as a whole. Will sell any part or piece of show property. First come first served. Don't regret after same is all sold if you failed to get something you needed. 1 Advance car; 2 Sleepers; 2 Stocks; 4 Flats; Bedding complete for sleepers; 1 Large Den; 4 Cross cages; Ticket wagon; Stake driver, used two months; 12 Baggage wagons; 1 Elephant; 2 Camels; 1 Lion, does Untamable Act; Boxing Kangaroo; Mon-



keys; 30 head baggage horses; harness; Menage horse and ponies; Tents all sizes and complete with poles, stakes and wire cables; 100 ft. Top 3 middles, 10-ft. wall; 70-ft. 3 middles; 10-ft. wall; Marquees for these tops; 2 Concession tops, 15 x 35 ft.; 40 x 70 Dressing top, 30 x 60 and 20 x 30 Dining tents; canvas 8 1/2 oz. in tops and 6 1/2 oz. in side walls, used this season, good condition; Seats, 3 kinds; 10 lengths red reserve back and foot rests; 8 lengths blue foot rest reserves, 25 lengths blue seats; complete light outfit, Bolte inside lights and Milburn carbide outside lights, fine shape; steel runs, checks, dining outfit, stoves and dishes, feed 100 people; Stake pullers, new; cash registers, Burroughs adder; 1 Underwood typewriter; sledges, tools, laying out pins and 1,001 miscellaneous pieces of property. Nothing reserved, and all will be sold. First come first served. Can buy any part of same reasonable. Cheap prices. Can be seen South Eastern Fair Grounds, Atlanta, Georgia. Address SUN BROTHERS SHOW CO., Box 82, Atlanta, Georgia."

Sun sold some of the equipment at once. He advertised the remaining property two weeks later in the November 23 *Billboard*. This time he put prices on each item: "Animals: One gentle, well trained female elephant, fine act, good wagon pusher, price \$3,000; untamable lion, large, black maned lion, fine specimen, good act, \$400; single hump, double hump, fine camels, \$350 each; Peccary, \$15; animals together, \$3,700. Cages: large lion's den, \$350; four cross cages, \$175 each, used three years, all cages \$1,000. New stake driver, used three months, \$850. Eleven baggage wagons, \$150 each, all baggage wagons, \$800. Lights: eight Bolte-Weyer lights, from two to twelve burners, lights complete, \$350, cost \$1,200; eight Milburn carbide lights, \$25 each, together \$160. Six American gas lanterns, traveling box, \$5 each. Lights and

Unloading the Sun Bros. big top pole wagon in 1918. Pfening Archives.

box, \$25. Tents: big top 100 ft., three 45 ft. middles, 10 ft. side wall, 8 oz., \$300; 20 x 21 marquee for same, \$30; 70 ft. side show top, two 30 ft. middles, used four months, \$500; Marquee for same, 10 x 14, \$20; 40 ft. round top, 30 ft. middle, 10 ft. side wall, \$100; two 15 x 35 ft. concession tops, \$40 each, \$75 both; 20 x 30 ft cook tent \$20. One car left: Advance, extra fine car, 60 feet over all, new steel wheels, fully equipped, handle any passenger train, can be changed inside for sleeper or combination state room, sleeper, baggage and dining car, worth \$2,000, will sell for \$1,000. All property at South Eastern Fair-Grounds, Atlanta, Georgia. Oscar Rogers in charge, or address Pete Sun, 4149 Langland St., Cincinnati, Ohio. Will sell all property to any one person for \$8,500, worth to any other show, \$20,000."

Pete Sun advertised again in the January 11, 1919 *Billboard* offering one elephant, one camel, 4 baggage horses, 4 cross cages, 4 baggage wagons, and the big top.

Seven of the railroad cars were sold to a railroad company and one was sold to Harry K. Main. Several baggage wagons were bought by the Atlanta Baggage and Cab Company. Some of the wagons remained in Atlanta junk yards as late as World War II. The disposition of the remaining property is unknown. Alice the elephant was sold to the Johnny J. Jones carnival. She died in the early 1960s on the Beers-Barnes Circus.

Everything was sold but the Sun Bros. name, which was retained for possible future use. However, the Sun name was never used again commercially for a circus until Uncle Gus used it for a grandstand show playing fairs in 1953.

One of dad's favorite circus stories was about the sale of the horses. It was early

November 1918, when the horses were being sold and World War I was coming to a close. The horses were sold on November 10th, just one day before the Armistice was signed on the 11th and World War I came to an end. What good timing, as it turned out, as the demand for and price of horses nose-dived.

After the circus was sold, the family moved in 1919 to Toledo. During a 1957 interview by Mitch Woodbury, theatrical editor of the *Toledo Blade*, Pete said, "I just wanted to get back to the old home town."

Pete's prominence in the circus world was recognized a number of times. A full page picture of him appeared on the cover of the *Clipper* on June 7, 1913. In the February 13, 1915 *Billboard* there was a quarter-page picture and he was on the cover of the May 18, 1918 *Billboard*.

In 1920, Pete became part owner and manager of the new Rivoli Theater in Toledo. In 1922 the Rivoli was sold to the Soubier Theater interests of Indianapolis, Indiana.

In retirement, Pete's interests turned to other things, including charities, Free Masonry and in particular to outdoor activities. He was one of the early and most active members of the Toledo Old Newsboys Association, was President twice. He was a 32nd Degree Mason and a Shriner.

His outdoor interests were primarily hunting and fishing. Our move to Toledo initially was to a cottage on the shore of Lake Erie a few miles into Michigan. Pete spent many hours on the lake catching perch, catfish and walleyes. It was a great place to grow up and provided the first opportunities for me to go fishing and hunting, often with dad. I later learned that most of the thousands of Canvasback and Redhead ducks that flew by our Lake Erie shore were on their way from the breeding grounds in Western Canada, headed to Chesapeake Bay country. That is where we now live.

My father died in 1961 at the age of 89 and mother in 1970 at 83, brother Pete in 1988 and Paul in 1992. Fortunately there are children and grandchildren in both my brothers' families to carry on the name.

Our family was extremely fortunate to have a father like dad who set the right kind of example for us in honesty, hard work, moral values and perseverance. I also have fond memories of the many pleasant hours we spent together hunting and fishing. Mother was the balance wheel of the family and helped immeasurably by adding her great Irish wit and wisdom. She also provided a strong religious and moral influence for all the family. Two of her philosophies I still



think about often. She would not think highly of the current emphasis on materialism. She believed you should appreciate what you have, not spend much time thinking about what you don't have. She would say, be happy you have a doughnut, don't worry about the hole in it. Another of her "gems of wisdom" was that one should strive to accomplish as much as possible in life, set a high goal and not worry if you don't achieve your full objective. Low aim, she said, was worse than occasional failure.

That these were very sound philosophies, becomes increasingly apparent with the passage of time. Dad and Mother really did give our family an exceptionally good start down the road of life.

SOME FINAL NOTES

There were some interesting things that happened over the years that Sun Bros. Circus toured that weren't described in the foregoing sections. Those that I think are worth recording are included here.

There was a possible blowdown, though not a serious one, that happened on the road one year, where or when, I haven't determined. Dad and mother talked of high winds one day during a performance when people, performers and animals were evacuated from the big top. A black circus worker named "Blue Jack" was said to have saved brother Paul during the evacuation. He earned my parent's everlasting gratitude. I don't believe any significant damage or serious injuries occurred, as it was not mentioned in any of the news articles that I have reviewed.

Dad's mother, known to us as Gramma-Klotz, was a frugal German woman. She had to be to raise her large family on her own.

One year, my father and Uncle Gus thought Gramma should enjoy some of the finer things in life. They bought her a beautiful full length fur coat. She thought

The big show band posed in front of the Sun Bros. ticket wagon in 1918. Pfening Archives.

it was lovely, but asked what it cost. They didn't want her to know how much it had really cost, and told her a much lower figure. Gramma showed one of her friends what a beautiful coat it was and told her how little it had cost, naming the figure her sons had told her. Her friend was impressed and offered to buy the coat for much more. Gramma couldn't turn down the chance to make such a good profit and sold her fur coat.

One of dad's favorite circus stories concerns an occurrence in a small Southern town. At that time there were some Southern towns where officials would on occasion try to raise license and permit fees to exorbitant figures, to charge what the traffic would bear. One time when the local sheriff was on his way to the circus grounds with a warrant to attach the train cars and equipment. Dad had been forewarned by a friend and met the sheriff at the entrance to the show. He greeted him with enthusiasm, invited him to be his personal guest for the show. After a tour of the animal tent and side show, they went to dad's private pullman car where they shared a few drinks and a very good lunch. The Sheriff then took the warrant from his coat pocket and tore it up, saying he had no intention of serving it. Forewarned is forearmed.

One day Dixie Vincent, a member of the circus staff, was driving my Mother in a carriage. The horse became frightened and began to run away. Dixie, a quiet unperturbable type of man, tried to rein in the horse while saying, "don't worry Mrs. Sun, every thing will be all right." Meanwhile, a wheel is coming off the carriage. Fortunately, every thing turned out well. The horse was brought under control and there was no significant damage or injury.

My mother thought this was a good example of when someone has a problem but doesn't quite realize it.

Pete and Gus knew many circus and other show business people. They knew the Miller Brothers of the 101 Wild West Show and both Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill.

Dad and Uncle Gus went to Canada frequently on fishing and hunting trips in the 1920s and 1930s. Fishing trips were usually to Sharbot Lake, Ontario, later to Lake Mashagama in the Missisagi Forest Reserve and to Manatoulin Island. I went along on one of the later trips to Lake Mashagama and it was great. Hunting trips for deer and moose were usually to Three Rivers, Quebec. On these trips dad, Gus and the other show people along would put on a real minstrel, "black-face," show which the local residents immensely enjoyed.

Dad's first job was carrying newspapers in Toledo. He never forgot about his newspaper carrying days. So on September 12, 1911, when Sun Bros. Circus was showing in Toledo, all the newsboys and many orphans were invited to the circus as guests. A very special guest was their mother who still lived in the old Klotz/Sun home in Toledo.

Pete was also active in later years in Toledo's Old Newsboys Association and was president twice. Each year they conducted was a charity fund drive. The money raised from this sale was used to provide Christmas baskets of food and toys for Toledo's needy families. And those were depression days, the early and mid-1930s when there were many needy families in Toledo.

Another occurrence happened when Sun Bros. was scheduled to perform in Canton, Ohio, September 19, 1901. President William McKinley had been assassinated earlier that week, and the funeral was to take place the same day in Canton. The local towns people were concerned about having a circus showing at the same time as the funeral. The police chief was sent to discuss the matter with the Sun brothers. It was arranged that there would be no afternoon performance to avoid a conflict with President McKinley's funeral. The circus band would also play dirges for the memorial. A news article commended show for their patriotism and cooperation.

The late Robert L. Parkinson, Fred Dahlinger and John Daniel Draper at Circus World Museum provided extensive information for this article. Fred D. Pfening, Jr. also provided editorial expertise and additional information from the Pfening Archives. Family members Louise Sun Remsburg, Eileen Sun and Col. Peter F. Sun, United States Army, were most helpful.

Wild Animals, Fanciful Costumes, Hand-Carved Wagons And Calliopes...

They're part of what once made the annual circus parade such a spectacular treat. Our BIG book brings back all the sights and sounds, folk art and colorful stories of those bygone days!

WHAT EVER HAPPENED to the spectacular annual circus parade? And what ever became of the magnificent hand-carved, brightly painted wagons that were "stars" in their own right?

You'll find out in *America's Great Circus Parade*!

As Lively as the Circus Itself!

Once upon a time—in fact, until about 1939—the circus parade was an annual event...and, before the days of radio and television, the best kind of "advertising" there was! Remember?

As soon as the show grounds were set up, it was time for the parade to wind through town, promoting the arrival of the circus. And what a show it was!

Dazzling wagons of every imaginable design—with wooden swirls and statues, mirrors and a rainbow of colors—carried exotic animals and brass bands, or simply exhibited their own unique craftsmanship. And every wagon was pulled by a powerful team of handsome horses that were proud to be a part of this spectacle!

After circus parades became a thing of the past, these magnificent wagons were stored in barns, sheds, even airplane hangars...or left abandoned in fields and forests to weather away.

Rescuing Pieces of the Past

Now those great old wagons are

back—and good as new! In

America's Great Circus Parade, you'll learn the whole fascinating story through hundreds of full-color and vintage black-and-white photos. At a BIG 168 pages, it's as colorful and exciting as the circus itself!

In this one-of-a-kind book, you'll learn how the Circus World Museum set out to acquire as many original, historic circus wagons as possible.

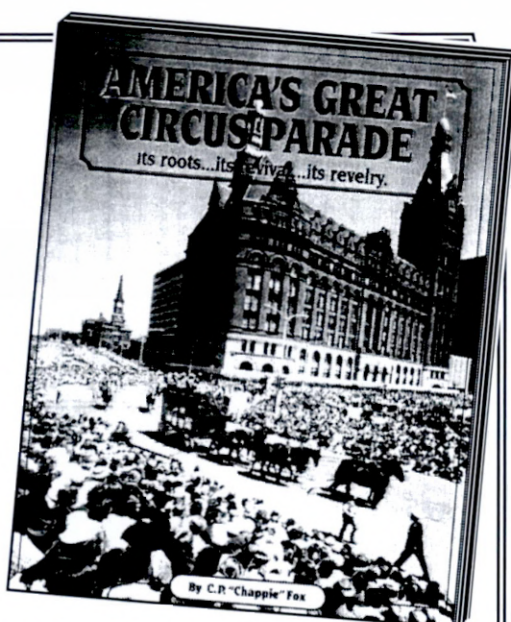
Through years of "detective work" (wait till you "hear" the stories!), author and former Circus World Museum Director C.P. "Chappie" Fox found more than 150 wagons all across the country—even as far away as England.

America's Great Circus Parade takes you through the fascinating process of bringing these grand and glorious pieces of folk art back to their former glory.

Best of all, you'll spend hours poring over the hundreds of detailed photos of these stunning circus wagons—in horse-drawn parades of yesteryear as well as today. We've even included vintage photos of the original 40-horse hitch that amazed folks back in 1904!

Not Just Any Parade!

As beautiful as the wagons are when they're just standing still, there's no com-



parison to the rolling glory of the wagons on parade, pulled by big draft horses and Percherons—with the lions and tigers, horses and musicians, dancing ladies and rollicking clowns all around them.

So this book gives you the "best seat in the house" to experience all the spine-tingling excitement of the annual Great Circus Parade—the old-fashioned, authentic historical re-creation now held every July in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

America's Great Circus Parade is a nostalgic treat for everyone who remembers "the day the circus came to town"... for everyone who's always loved the grandeur and excitement of the circus... and for everyone who loves the bright beauty of handcrafted folk art!

SAVE \$1.00 Per Copy!

We're making a special offer to readers of *Bandwagon*: You can order one copy of this softcover, 8 1/2" x 10 1/2" book for just \$9.98. But when you order two or more copies, you can save \$1.00 on each copy. (Just think what great gifts they'll make for birthdays, anniversaries, graduations and every other special occasion—and stock up with this money-saving offer!)

TO ORDER: Just call toll-free: 1-800/558-1013. Or, send \$9.98 per copy (\$8.98 per copy when you order two or more—remember, this way you save \$1.00 per copy!) plus \$2.50 shipping and handling to:

Country Store

Offer #3326, 5925 Country Lane
P.O. Box 990, Greendale WI 53129

**Save
\$1.00 per
copy when
you order
two or
more!**



An unusual circus was organized in 1937. Its life was shorter than its performers.

Stanley Graham's show business experience had been at world's fair type exhibitions. In 1933 and 1934 he operated the Midget Village at the Century of Progress in Chicago. In 1935 he had midget and girl shows at the San Diego exposition. In 1936 he had midget and girl shows at the Great Lakes Exposition in Cleveland.

While in Cleveland he conceived the idea of an all midget circus. While he sought advice from experienced, competent circus men at the time, it does not appear that he paid much attention to them.

The show was framed in an unorthodox manner. Most of the equipment was leased. The show moved on system railroad passenger and box cars. Trucks were contracted in each city to gilly the equipment from the lot to the cars. Electricity was bought in. All personnel were to be housed in hotels and moved from there to the lot in taxi cabs.

The first information about the show appeared in the April 24, 1937 *Billboard*: "Chicago, April 17. Stanley Graham, impresario who made his start in show business at A Century of Progress with the Midget Village and has since become the producer of various other attractions at large expositions, has entered the circus business. On May 21 he will launch Graham's International Midget Circus at Dallas, Texas, and will tour the country, playing many the larger cities.

"John R. McMahon, who was interested in the Streets of Paris at A Century of Congress and is now associated with Graham, is in Chicago in the interest of the circus. The show is already booked for a number of Midwest cities, among them Tulsa, Wichita, Kansas City and St. Louis, with strong newspaper and other tie-ups in each place. It also is booked for the Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto.

"The show will move on 20 cars and will play two and three-day stands. It will use a 120 x 270 khaki top seating about 4,800. Personnel will include 180 people. Practically all of the performers will be midgets. There are a few exceptions. The young McLaughlin boys, riders and ropers, who were a hit at Madison Square Garden, New York, two years ago, will be with the show. So also will the 7-year-old daughter of Tad Lucas, famous wild west rider. Kenneth Waite will handle clown alley.

"Graham has had the idea of a midget circus for some time and he feels, from

SHORT SKETCHES OF FORMER SHOWS

STANLEY GRAHAM'S INTERNATIONAL MIDGETS CIRCUS

SEASON OF 1937

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

the interest already shown, that it will prove a huge success."

The May 22 *Billboard* reported: "Graham Ready for Dallas May 21.

"Dallas, Texas, May 16.—Everything is being readied for the premiere here May 21 of Stanley Graham's International Midget Circus. The six-day engagement will be under sponsorship of the Salesmanship Club of Dallas. Graham announced that the show is already booked through some date in October.

"Graham has 120 midgets assigned to acts and has an animal list of more than 80. An innovation will be use of two powerful searchlights playing in the sky over the tent at night.

"Included in the act roster will be 10 trained elephants of the Powers troupe, in America from Europe for the first time in a number of years; the Robinson elephant troupe, the Christy elephant and Arabian stallion troupe, Max Chrysler's German flying trapeze act, the Dudley and Lester trapeze troupes, Torelli's dogs,

The Graham midway, side show, marquee and big top in Dallas. Circus World Museum collection.

the Three Little Pigs that appeared in *Pennies From Heaven* and others.

"An incomplete list of executive personnel includes John Leaster, equestrian director; John McMahon, advance agent; J. A. McCaffery, contracting agent; H. W. McClaskle, general agent; Buck Saunders, in charge of midget personnel; Grover McCabe, lot superintendent; John Barry, designer and architect; Ed Delevan, ticket manager; and D. H. Rosenberg, steward. Graham will travel with show as active manager.

"Gene Palfrey will conduct the 24 piece midget band and Kenneth Waite has been named producer of the 24-man clown unit.

"The itinerary from Dallas includes San Antonio, Tulsa, Wichita, St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, Toronto and London, Ontario."

Although not mentioned in the press a lion act was booked from W. A. (Snake) King. The act had been worked by his son Manuel and had opened and closed with the James M. Cole Circus a year earlier. The act was worked by Max Chrysler.

Conspicuous by their absence at the opening on May 21 were experienced circus bosses. Apparently no qualified advance people were hired. The new Baker-Lockwood white big top was a 120 with three 50 foot middles. Folding chairs were on the front and back side with blues at either end.

An independent side show appeared on the midway along with a couple of concession tents. The Graham name was painted on the ticket boxes of the annex. The only other canvas on the show was a performers dressing tent and a band



dressings tent. There was no cookhouse.

Graham was lavish in his spending for costumes, canvas, seats and properties. The cost of transporting of a number of acts from Europe also cut into his pocket book. Extraordinary expenses created a huge daily nut. His bank roll was greatly diminished by opening day.

The personnel assembled in Dallas a few days before the scheduled opening and there was a short rehearsal period. It was quickly evident that the 24 person midget band would not be able to cut the performance. The band was relegated to appear only in the opening spec. An electric organ was quickly hired to play the performance.

The May 29 *Billboard* covered the opening: "Dallas, Texas, May 22. Stanley Graham's International Midget Circus had its world premiere here last night before an audience occupying three-fourths of the 4,000-seat tent. Matinee and night performances will be staged the remaining five days of the initial stand, after which the show will entrain for San, Antonio and Northern cities.

"The weather was ideal. An innovation was two giant searchlights playing in the skies over the tents. Show, which has brand-new equipment, is set up on the edge of the business district and its premiere run is sponsored by the Salesmanship Club of this city.

"The 22 acts went off within 15 minutes over the scheduled two hours. Troubles were encountered by the new staff handling four types of tickets, heavy dust rising from the animal rings and a few technical tangles, but everything moved surprisingly fast for a circus organized in such a short time.

"A standard-type circus program beginning with grand march was followed, ending with the Robinson, Christy and Power's elephants in three rings. Outside of trainers only midgets worked in every set. Max Chrysler was outstanding in his lion act and later worked the Arabian horses. Luz Villalobos led the Ike Rose Royal midget fan dance and worked the middle ring in the Donald and Jean McLaughlin trick-rope act.

"Torelli ponies and dogs, Christy ponies and three little pigs drew heavy applause. John Leaster's imported act starred Murial Longden, as Auriel, and Mary Patricia Finn, who made a one legged catch on a backward somersault from the swinging bar and later walked upside down by her toes blindfolded. Charles Dudley's acrobatic troupe and Garland Slatten's plank elephant act drew attention. Ray Dean announced.

"Side show headliners include Major James Doyle and Gilbert Tracey, sword swallower.

"Graham ironed out many minor dif-



The spec on the hippodrome track at the opening matinee. Note pitifully small crowd. Don Carson collection.

iculties during the first performance, announcing that everything will be working smoothly in a few days. Among the guests was J. C. McCaffery, president of the Showmen's League of America."

Circus fan A. Morton Smith visited the show in Dallas on May 25 accompanied by C. M. Tinsley, the staff photographer of the *Gainesville Register*, who snapped nearly one hundred views. Tinsley's photos are the only known ones of the Graham show.

Smith renewed acquaintance with many of his circus friends including John

This half page ad appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* on May 14, a week before the opening. Pfening Archives.


Robinson IV, W. A. (Snake) King, Harold Christy, Merritt Belew, Kenneth Waite, John McMahan, Buck Saunders, J. H. McCloskey and others, and met Ray Dean, Ed Delevan and George W. Christy for the first time.

Business during the six day Dallas stand was poor. This may have been due to a lack of publicity and over confidence in the sale of tickets by the sponsor.

Graham hauled it all piece by piece to the rail yard and moved to San Antonio where he hoped a tie-in with a local drug store chain would bring in patrons.

Here again lack of experience proved to be a problem. There were no references to a press agent working for the show. The show used a cheap line of posters which were posted in poor locations only a few days ahead of the San Antonio opening.

The first publicity about the Graham show broke six days before the opening



Stanley Graham's

3 RINGS AND STAGE

HORSES • PONIES • ELEPHANTS • DOGS

FREE! FREE!

With each 25c purchase we will give you FREE one (1) coupon good for 25c on any regular admission ticket to the MIDGET CIRCUS!

Regular Admission 25c
Wyatt Coupon 25c
Price (including tax) 50c
The Wyatt Coupon Lets You

SAVE 25c


GET COUPONS AT ANY WYATT STORE

WORLD FAMOUS

International

MIDGETS

CIRCUS



SEATING CAPACITY 6500

DALLAS 6 DAYS COMMENCING MAY 21

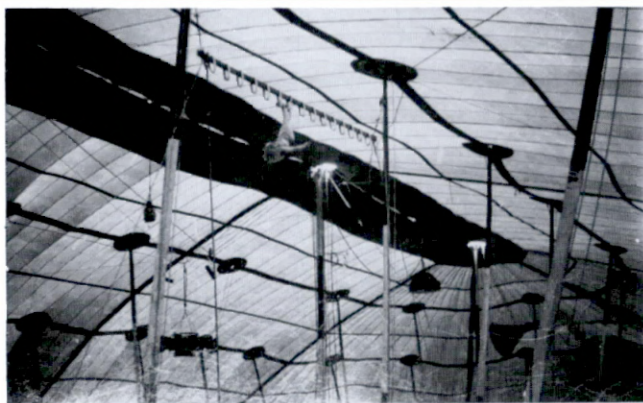
Opposite Young St. Post Office

when the drug store chain newspaper publicity began.

Some one on the show sent this upbeat report that appeared in the June 5 *Billboard*: "Granam Show Has Sellout.

"San Antonio, May 29. Stanley Graham's International Midget Circus opened here yesterday beginning its first road engagement with a house fully sold out for five days, matinee and evening performances. John McMahon, advance agent, announced that every performance was sold out through a ticket deal with a local drug chain.

"Before the show left Dallas Wednesday night in 20 railroad cars Stanley Graham, its creator, had revamped the program from top to bottom and had straightened out all technical knots



Patricia Finn walking upside down in foot loops. Don Carson collection.

that the Dallasites were under the impression that the circus was to be shown for the duration of the Pan-American Ex-

the arrangement of tents and entrance had to be reversed.'

'The midway has been developed since opening and the general atmosphere of the entire lot has been accentuated.

"Billed as 'Cavalcade,' the grand march is peopled by Indians, planters, George Washington, cotton pickers, pioneers in covered wagons, Forty-Niners, horse thief and sheriff, Buffalo Bill cowboys, the band, P. T. Barnum, Tom Thumb, the Robinson, Powers and Christy elephants and clowns, horses and dogs.

"The first act is center ring only, executed by Max Chrysler working five lionesses. Stunts include a barrel roll, perches and jumps. Clown barber shop with Negro midget being shaved, are given in end rings, while Garland Slatton di-



Midgets on bally platform of the Graham annex. Don Carson collection.

encountered to date. Several new acts have been added.

"Although we played to a weak house Dallas, I am thoroughly satisfied," Graham announced.

"During the five days after the circus made its debut in Dallas May 21 the colored side show banners arrived and were erected; about 1,000 more grandstand seats were added in the main tent, running the total to 5,500 seats; an after-show starring the Rose Parisian Midgets was added, at 25 cents, and other changes were effected.

"The most important change in the program eliminated vacancies in the two end rings during center ring acts. Thinness of action during center ring acts was the outstanding deficiency at the premiere.

"Analyzing his weak attendance after the first four days at Dallas, Graham came to the conclusion

position. During its Dallas run the circus averaged little better than 60 per cent capacity but gained daily.

"I consider the Dallas engagement as actually a dress rehearsal," he explained. 'In the first place it was thrown together in three weeks. The location was poor and

Kenneth Waite, with straw hat, in the men's dressing top. He furnished the clown props. Don Carson collection.



Stanley Graham and two of his little people in front of the midway grease joint. Don Carson collection.

rects the plank-walking elephant act in the center.

"High point of the Torelli dogs and pony act is dog racing and hurdling on a turntable. Ponies, dogs and monkeys work together. Great Danes and ponies do waltzing act. There are several jumping terriers and intricate dog and monkey saddle-riding routines.

"Max Chrysler works again with the Christy horses, the featured stunt being their ability to reform into original position blindfolded. Charles Dudley's mixed midget and grownup tumbling and acrobatics have been a hit since the opening. John Leaster's aerial act, featuring Mary Patricia Finn and Auriel, has been improved, Miss Finn' upside-down aerial walk being the only act of the show to take a spot with the tent darkened.



Max Chrysler working the Manuel King lion act. Don Carson collection.

"An impressive three-ring combination has been worked out with a shimmying elephant, elephants and horses playing football and elephants ringing castanets, waltzing and a drunk act. The Boers brothers occupy center ring with their acrobatics.

"The outstanding hit with the children to date is the Three Little Pigs opening and closing a gate, jumping a stile and

The Boers brothers perch act in the center ring in Dallas. Don Carson collection.

climbing a ladder and sliding down a chute. Another stunt is unloading the 18 band members from a coupe driven into the center ring."

The three full elephant herds appeared in their standard routines to finish the performance. The first three days in San Antonio brought rain to the show. But a comment in the July-August, 1937 *White Tops* said: "The rain

was not sufficient to keep away patronage, if people had known a circus was in the city. On Monday a heavy downpour flooded the lot, and the promoters gave up the ghost then, and there. Attachments were levied on all visible show property, mostly by local creditors.

"Now followed several hours of anxiety on the part of several hundred employees

as Mr. Graham, reported very cool and confident, worked the wires and informed the people that all was well, and that assistance would soon come so that the show could make the 500 mile jump to Tulsa, the next stand. About a day later Mr. Graham boarded a plane, ostensibly for Chicago, and up until now, no one has heard of his whereabouts."

"This affair is believed to be the most pitiful case of the abandonment of con-fiding and innocent circus people in all American circus annals. About 250 people, many thousands of miles from home, penniless, with numerous animals to care for, and chances of early engagements poor, as all circuses and shows are far to the North and East, where they should be, at this time of the year.

"Several of the animal acts, that could secure the funds, shipped out early in the week, but all of the midgets, and the

greater part of the rest were hopelessly stranded."

The June 12 *Billboard* told of the closing: "San Antonio, June 5. Stanley Graham's International Midget Circus, which opened at Dallas May 21 for a six-day engagement and then came to this city, folded here this week. Reason given was that rain cut into attendance too heavily.

"Creditors have attached the tent and fixtures. Graham is reported to have gone to Chicago to seek funds. The 120 midgets, many from the Midget Village at the Dallas exposition last year, have money due them. They were feasted at the St. Anthony Hotel here Friday by Porter Loring, circus fan.

"Animal acts have dispersed. George W. Christy with horses and elephants



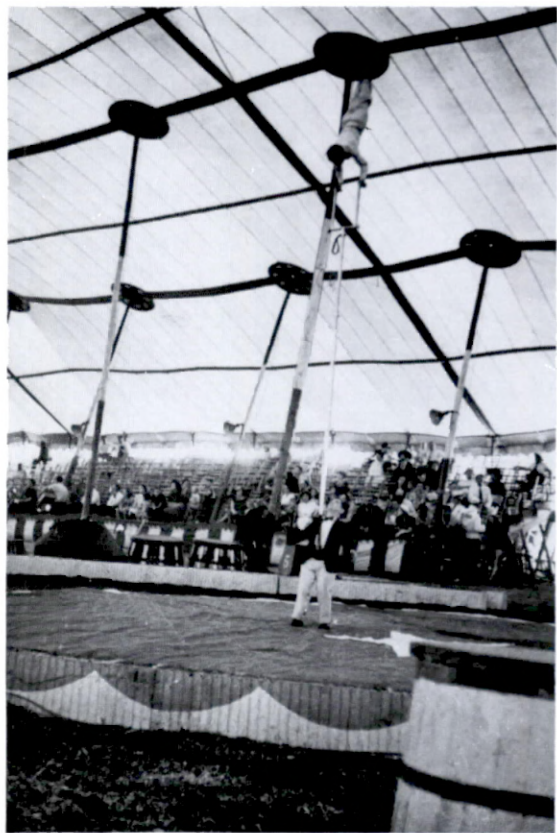
The band dressing tent near the back door. Don Carson collection.

went to a ranch at Dumont, Texas; John Robinson's elephants to winter quarters at Terrace Park, Cincinnati, Ohio; A. E. Torrillo and Mrs. A. Christenson with trained dogs to Rochester, Indiana. The circus had been moving on 15 cars.

"Ways are being sought to put on a show to raise money so that those members still here can leave town."

A later *Billboard* said that Baker-Lockwood denied attaching the tent, thus being responsible for closing the show. They did, however, recover the big top and returned it to Kansas City.

The June 1937 *Greater Show World* had this to say about the Graham show: "The Stanley R. Graham Midget Circus, hit the rocks at their second stand, San Antonio, Texas in the worst mess on record. None, if any, received a penny. Eighty midgets were in distress in hotels and found themselves on a mis-meal camp tour—with a ration of one meal a day, which even for a midget isn't quite enough. Graham proved himself in an emergency, as helpless as a crow. It is reported that all this trouble came about through Johnny



McMahon misrepresenting to Graham about the contracts and Graham, not investigating same.


"The alleged San Antonio advance sale faded into nothing to speak of. One hundred twenty-five workmen were seen walking off the lot with everything they could carry. Even in that hour when one usually calls for advice from friends--Graham turned a deaf ear. Rumor has it that Graham lost some 40 grand. The tents were shipped back to Baker-Lockwood.

"Perhaps the four days of rain at San Antonio was the cause of the closing

Newspaper ad used on opening day in Dallas. The 6,500 seats indicates the size of the big top. Pfening Archives.

WORLD PREMIERE

TONITE 8:00 P. M.
DOORS OPEN AT 7 O'CLOCK
TWICE DAILY THEREAFTER
ON THE LOT OPPOSITE
YOUNG STREET POST OFFICE
IN THE BIG TENT



Stanley GRAHAM'S
WORLD FAMOUS

International MIDGETS CIRCUS


6500 SEATS

The \$500,000 Show
with 90 per cent of the professional midgets of the world... now under one big tent for the first time... Lions... Dogs... Monkeys... Pigs... Monkeys... Ponies...

3,000 Seats at 50¢ PLUS TAX

NOTICE!
PLEASE EXCHANGE
WYATT TICKETS
AT BOX OFFICE ON THE LOT
Good Any Performance

The World's Greatest Herds of Performing Elephants
in a **Gigantic 3-Ring Circus**



along with Graham's B.R. running at low-ebb--all when summed up--made it possible for each of the participants--going their respective ways.

"Nate Eagle, having heard of the Graham fiasco in circus management, contacted some of the midgets and also the management of the Great Lakes Exposition."

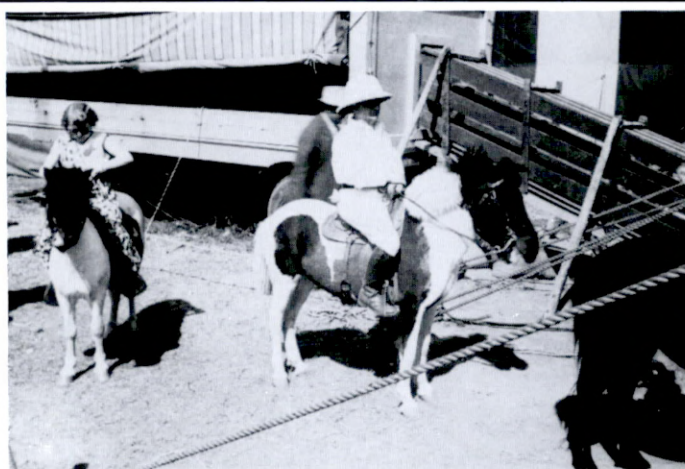
The June 18 *Billboard* also told of the plight of the midgets: "San Antonio, June 12. Proceeds of a benefit show, staged by performers of the Stanley Graham Midget Circus, which folded here last week, were divided June 9 between the midgets and hotel and restaurant men, who have housed and fed them since they hit town two weeks ago.

"Remnants of the circus took the stage of the Majestic Theater Tuesday night after the movie run had closed and packed in 1,500 folk for an hour-and-a-half bill. Showing was arranged by William O'Donnell, manager for Interstate Circuit here, who contributed the gross, less tax if any, to the troupe. Show grossed \$800.

"Of 122 little folk who came here with the show the last week in May only 75 remain and about 50 of those plan to pocket the few bucks distribution and make for Dallas. The Pan-American Exposition opening there may provide spot for some of them.

"Twenty midgets, with John Leaster and Mrs. Ike Rose, stayed over until Friday night for a benefit show arranged by the Friendly Neighbors. Shows were given matinee and night on boards of Municipal Auditorium. Bill included Lester's English midgets, Dudley's midget acrobats, Mrs. Rose's Parisian midgets and Mrs. Power's four elephants. Lester also has a pony act with 12 animals. Take of the show was split 50-50 between the performers and the Friendly Neighbors, a local charity society.

"Nearly all the little folk were independent. Exceptions are those contracted to Lester and Mrs. Rose. Leaster is dickering for contract with Inter



Max Chrysler on pony in front of the King lion act semi-trailer cage. Don Carson collection.

state and may open soon in Dallas."

San Antonio circus fans Porter Loring, Harry Hertzberg and Pasco Scaperlanda took over the arrangements of the financial affairs of the midgets, arranging pro rata settlements with hotel keepers and other debtors and from the proceeds of the benefit purchased tickets for Dallas and Cleveland for about forty of them. Expositions were held for the second years in Dallas and Cleveland in 1937.

The short life of this show was typical of those organized by inexperienced outdoor showmen. The bankroll was spent before the show opened, and expenses were not controlled. Competent bosses were missing, especially on the advance. Advertising was poor. The show had no press agent.

Nothing was heard of one time circus owner Stanley Graham after his 1937 midget fiasco.

Don Carson is thanked for the use of his photographs.

Lining up for spec. The side show tent and banners in background. Don Carson collection.



Now Offering! Official 1994 Great Circus Parade Pins

Replicas of 3 Fairy-Tale Floats

Made Famous by the Barnum & Bailey Circus

Only \$5 Each

Add 50¢ per pin for shipping and handling



CINDERELLA
Actual Size



MOTHER GOOSE
Actual Size



OLD WOMAN IN THE SHOE
Actual Size

Other New 1994 Offerings

Great Circus Parade Poster	\$10
Great Circus Parade T-Shirt.....	\$15
Great Circus Parade Sweatshirt	\$35
Great Circus Parade Golf Shirt.....	\$35

Add \$3 per item for shipping and handling

ORDER TODAY FROM:

The Great Circus Parade Inc.

115 East Wells Street

Milwaukee, WI 53202

(or call 414 273-7877)

— Checks, Money Orders and All Major Credit Cards Accepted —

Back in the days before women had names of their own, Mrs. George James was seized by Rex—alias King, alias Prince—a Nubian lion, who tore "a great hole in the side of her face, laid the flesh across the top of her head open for several inches, and scratched a dreadful place across her arm. This was all done in less time than it takes to tell it," according to the Ellsworth (Kansas) *Messenger* of June 7, 1906.

Mrs. James was an employee of Parker Amusement Company which played the Ellsworth Spring Jubilee of five days and nights, May 29 to June 2, Tuesday through Saturday. The attack occurred between the matinee and the evening performance on Friday. The *Messenger* called it an accident, although there was a strong suspicion that Rex did it on purpose.

A handout appearing in the May 10 *Messenger* announced that "The C. W. Parker Amusement company will present in Ellsworth this spring during the carnival the big trained wild animal arena. They have lions, tigers, leopards and birds from foreign countries. The animals are exceptionally well trained, and do many wonderful stunts. The trainers are all experienced in their line of business and as the performance is given in a big steel bound arena there is no danger to the spectators."

The Parker show was primarily a carnival company, but among the "10 Big Shows" was an abbreviated circus presenting "Parker's Big Trained Wild Animal Show." Featured as a free act was "Faustina Looping the big loop," Another daring leaper was "Caddo, Leaping the Volcanic Gap."

A handout on May 17 described the act of Faustina. "The Big Free Exhibition at the Ellsworth Spring Jubilee.

"Mille Faustina, who does the daredevil act of 'looping the loop' in a big ball, with the Parker Amusement company, is a petite pretty woman who seems to have no real conception of the words danger or fear. The act is without doubt the most hazardous ever attempted by woman-kind. La Petite Faustina climbs to the top of a tower 68 feet high and enters a big wooden ball; two men, who accompany her, lock and securely fasten the clasps, and at a word the big ball is shoved down and started on its mad course. It goes down an inclined plane to the ground; the momentum gained by its rapid downward course carries it up and around the big steel loop, from where it makes the jump through space into the net raised to receive it."

ala Carte or, perhaps THE BLUE PLATE SPECIAL

By Orin Copple King

Copyright © 1993 Orin Copple King

Nowhere is there an explanation of "Caddo Leaping the Volcanic Gap."

Parker in 1906, had four shows on the road, all of comparable size. The Ellsworth unit was advertised as, "10 Big Shows; 6 Free Attractions; 16 Double length Cars; 2 Good Bands Furnish Music; 10 Military Band Organs; 2 Electric Light and Power Plants; 125 People Employed; \$73,000.00 Actual Investment."

A more detailed description appeared in the *Messenger* on May 31.

"The Ellsworth Big Spring Jubilee is now on in full blast, and the Commercial club certainly made no mistake when it secured the C. W. Parker Amusement company as the attraction. Much has been said and written about the 'Parker Standard' for carnival shows and the truth of all has been well demonstrated here this week. Everything is clean, bright and moral, with no grafting, drunkenness or rowdyism allowed. Every attache from the managers to the canvas men are gentle-

This Parker ad appeared in the May 10, 1906 Ellsworth *Messenger*. Kansas State Historical Society.

manly acting and appearing. The free attractions are all high class and much above the ordinary free acts. Le (sic) Petite Faustina, the lady who loops the loop in the hollow wooden sphere, is a little lady of great nerve for daring to defy death in her wonderful act. Valere & Clark on the double trapeze do a finished act. Sig Claricus, king of the bounding wire, is very clever. Mons. Bovini Foecessi,

who leaps the gap on a bicycle, was injured the fore part of the week, but will do his act Friday and Saturday.

"The fronts of the pay shows are the most beautiful ever seen here, and are all wagon fronts, heavily carved and gilded, and of the shows themselves nothing but praise can be said. At the moving picture show are shown excellent films of the San Francisco disaster; these are a great treat to our people. The comedy pictures are all very good and laughable.

"At the beautiful Tyrolean Alps one is taken for a day and night through the most beautiful part of Switzerland at the foot of Mount Matterhorn, where the Alpine Glow is seen true to nature. This is a mechanical and an electrical spectacular production, and words fail fittingly to describe its beauty. After seeing it you feel like the little child who said to her mother, 'Oh! Momma if there was only some more.'

"The Wild Animal Circus and Dog and Pony show gives an excellent performance, and well deserves the large patronage it is receiving.

"The 'Nellie Show' is an entertainment of rare merit. Here you hear the latest songs, beautifully illustrated, rendered by Mr. J. L. Lucas, the phenomenal baritone; see a grand electric dance, and also see the lady turned to stone, and again back to life, and passing through a panel of flowers. This show is well worth the price.

"The Katzenjammer Castle' and 'Happyland' are proving great mirth provoking attractions. The Penny Vaudeville is always crowded, as is the Ferris Wheel.

"A carnival without a merry-go-round would be incomplete, so Mr. Parker has given us his 3-horse-abreast carry-us-all with its \$10,000 orchestration, and it is worked to its capacity all day long."

The Parker show arrived in Ellsworth on Sunday, May 27, and proceeded to unload the train. Sunday was always a special day to the people of the town.

"Considerable indignation," according to the May 31 *Messenger* "was created last Sunday afternoon because the carnival outfit unloaded and hauled its material up on to the streets on Sunday. The opin-

Parker Amusement Co.
Ellsworth, Kansas

May 29 to June 2

5 Big Days and Nights 5
10 Big Shows 10
6 Free Attractions 6

FAUSTIMA *Looping the big loop*

CADDO *Leaping the Volcanic Gap*

Free on the Streets

EXCURSION RATES ON ALL RAILROADS

Big Animal Show...Katzenjammer
Castle..Creation..Electric Theatre
Laughing Palace..Vaudeville
Carry-us-all..Ferris Wheel

BEGINNING TUESDAY, MAY 29

ion of those who disapprove of such things on the Sabbath should always be respected. The Parker management, we understand, ordered their men to stop work as soon as they learned there was an objection to it. This, however, was only one of the instances observed here last Sunday. Several cars of stock was (sic) loaded during the afternoon, and a ball game was in progress while the Parker people were unloading."

The Parker show claimed to be free of thugs and rascals, but Allen Thrash, a local farmer, was severely thrashed by two "hangers-on" of the carnival. The men were fined \$7.50, but the *Messenger* thought, "It should have been \$27.50."

Remember Mrs. James? She was taken to the Ellsworth hospital where she remained for five weeks. The *Messenger* reported that, "She had gone into the cage with the two young lions to practice for one of the acts given at their performances. She is not the regular performer for this act, but as an 'understudy' practiced it daily."

According to one version Mrs. James was rescued by a man who hit Rex with an iron bar, but another version stated that she was saved by the woman who regularly worked the act.

Near the end of her hospital stay Mrs. James was visited by Mrs. Barnes, the regular trainer.

The problems of Mrs. James disappeared from the news until May 7, 1907, when the Parker show played Salina, Kansas. Mrs. James filed suit for \$10,000 and Sheriff Meyer took possession of the show via attachment, but with the posting of a bond the Parker aggregation was allowed to operate.

The first word on the coming to Topeka of the Al G. Barnes Wild Animal Circus was a story on February 21, 1907, in the *Topeka State Journal*.

"BIG WILD ANIMAL SHOW.

"One Will Be Held in Auditorium Next Week.

"The Auditorium next week will be given over to the Al G. Barnes wild animal circus and Ruth Gray, known as nature's most mystic phenomenon. A combination which is heralded by the press of other cities as being one of the greatest exhibitions ever witnessed.

"The Barnes animal circus is conceded to be one of the best organizations of its kind and offers some of the most thrilling wild animal acts ever known, including Dainty Dolly Castle, the dancing girl in the lions' den. Miss Castle works a group of bears and African lions, including the famous \$10,000 beauty Prince. This lion is said to be one of the most perfect specimens of his type.

"Another feature is the performance

of Mille Martha Florine and her fierce untamable lion Caesar Wallace. Miss Florine has been seriously injured on two occasions this season and just recently returned from the hospital at Omaha, undaunted and ready to continue her daring exhibitions.

"This big attraction goes direct to Denver for a two weeks' run and then to Kansas City Convention hall for a similar engagement. Topeka is very fortunate in getting this show and will no doubt tax the capacity of the Auditorium next week."

One of the most important duties of a circus manager is to avoid the payment of license fees and if that is impossible to reduce it as much as he can. The manager of the Barnes show, A. B. Marks, was informed by the city license collector that the show must pay \$50 for each day of the five day run.

Marks stated that he thought the \$50 a day rent for the auditorium was all the license needed. Marks took his complaint to the city attorney who refused to budge from the daily \$50 license required by ordinance.

Mayor Davis at first held to the \$50 per day license, but Marks convinced him that the show could not pay so much. In the end, it was decided, according to the *Topeka Daily Capital*: "that as the show was not a circus and as it did not give a street parade it would be allowed to come under the ordinance which would class it as a museum. The license for this sort of a show is \$4 a day."

The Barnes show paid the city \$270 for the privilege of showing and using the auditorium for five days.

Ruth Gray, the mystic, finished her act

This Barnes ad appeared in the February 22, 1907 *Topeka State Journal*. Kansas State Historical Society.

by answering questions written by members of the audience and sealed in envelopes. The audience was amazed and mystified by her ability to read names and answer questions without first opening the envelopes.

At the age of 12 this author worked a short stint in Topeka's only burlesque theatre assisting RAMO THE GREAT. RAMO THE GREAT also answered questions sight unseen, in the manner of Ruth Gray. He would place the envelope in his shirt collar at the back of neck and then launch into a period of intense concentration as he delivered the answer.

The first answer was directed to a skill seated in the audience. The first envelope contained the question for the next answer, so RAMO THE GREAT was always one envelope ahead of the audience.

Mrs. Ramo smoked big black cigars.

Among those named in Mrs. James' suit filed in Salina were C. W. Parker, Al G. Barnes, Jerry Barnes, Harley Tyler and Roy Creamer. The case came to trial in the United States circuit court in Topeka on December 11, 1907.

A reporter for the *Topeka State Journal* described Mrs. James as "about 5 feet 2 inches high, petite, weighs about 95 pounds—and was, well, just a mere handful. She wears her hair marceled in a perfectly grand manner though she alleges that her looks were badly disfigured as the result of her encounter she is still mighty good looking."

One of the priorities on the first day of the jury trial was to determine who was responsible for the lions.

"In the first petition," according to the *Journal*, "suit was filed against C. W. Parker, Parker Amusement company, Al G. Barnes and Jerry Barnes. In this petition it was stated that the shows were owned by the first named three defendants and that Jerry M. Barnes was the manager of the show which exhibited at Ellsworth. In the second petition as amended the same parties were named as defendants but it was stated that Creamer and Tyler were the general managers and general agents of the Parker Amusement company and controlled the amusement company's shows. The animals it was stated were owned by Al G. Barnes and Jerry M. Barnes who were in immediate control. This was filed November 27, 1906. The second supplemental petition was filed in August 30 of this year [1907]. In this Harley Tyler, Roy Creamer and Dollie B. Barnes were added to the list of defendants. In this it was stated that the lions, monkeys, ponies and dogs were under the immediate control, direction and management of Al G. Barnes and that they were owned jointly by him and his wife Dollie



AUDITORIUM

Five Nights and Three Matinees
Starting Monday, Feb. 25

RUTH GREY

Nature's Most Mystic Phenomenon

And AL. G. BARNES Trained


Wild Animal Circus

Largest and Best Trained
Animal Show on Tour.
Performing Wild Shows

CEASAR WALLACE
Ponies, Dogs, Monkeys,
The Fierce Untamable Lion.

Dainty Dolly Castle
The Dancing Girl in the Lion's Den
Matinees—Tues., Thurs. and Fri.
Prices: Night, 30c, 25c and 10c.
Matinees: 25c.

Reserved seats on sale Saturday
at Stanfield's Drug Store.



Barnes. That they in turn were under the control and direction with their shows of Creamer and Tyler who were acting as general managers in control of the Parker shows.

"C. W. Parker in the denial that he enters states that Creamer and Tyler were not managers general or otherwise for the Parker Amusement company. Parker states that he had no interest nor owned in any manner the lions mentioned in the suit. He also states that he is not a partner in the Parker Amusement company in co-partnership with any one else. Al G. Barnes denies that he had control of the animal show or that any of his servants were in control of the animal show that exhibited under Creamer and Tyler. Roy Creamer states that in 1905 he went into partnership with Harley Tyler and leased a show from C. W. Parker and that Al G. Barnes owned a show and traveled along with them. This was the animal show."

Mrs. James took the stand on the first day of the trial. The following is from the *Journal's* account of the day's testimony.

"When were you married?" asked her attorney.

"On May 3, 1906."

"For whom were you working at that time?"

"For the Western Union."

"What experience did you have previously in taming wild animals or in training them?"

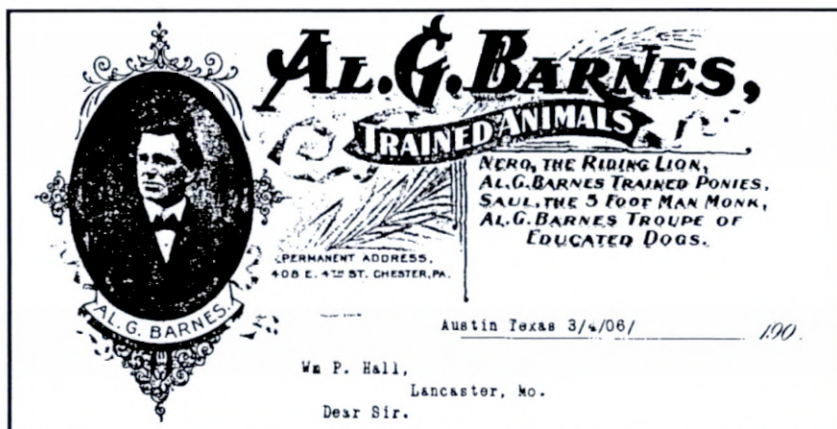
"None whatever," she replied in a low voice.

"How old are you Mrs. James?"

"Thirty-five years," she confessed without a tremor in her voice. [The trial began on her thirty-fifth birthday.]

"On the 15th of May accompanied by her husband, Mrs. James stated that she came to Abilene, which is the headquarters of several shows run in connection with the Parker Amusement company. She started in to the training of dogs attached to the animal show at the suggestion of her husband who has had considerable experience following shows and circuses."

"He [Dr. H. C. Hissem of Ellsworth] stated that her scars which she bore were of a permanent nature and that her right arm was badly injured so that she never would have the full use of it . . . he stated



Letterhead used by Barnes in 1906. Circus World Museum collection.

that her face and head was badly cut and that her arm was cut and her back also.

"Blood poisoning had set in, said the physician and made the case more difficult."

"Any one who thought to get three lions for nothing simply because they heard the lions did not have an owner, can sink limply back into his seat for Jerry Barnes owns the beasts."

"I have always owned them," confessed Jerry smiling. "I have got a bill sale for them. I got them in New York."

"One of her contentions is that the cage was improperly built and that it should have had a safety door which would have enabled her to escape when she desired to get out of harm's way."

"Yesterday C. W. Parker stated on the witness stand that he did not own the animal show that traveled with the Carnival company. He owned the equipment in a large measure which stated he in turn leased at 25 per cent of the gross receipts to these other people."

The *Journal* continued its coverage of the trial on December 13, beginning with "Directions how to become a lion tamer."

"Grasp the door of the lion cage and shake it hard three times making the lions retreat to the back of the cage."

"Then enter. Don't fail to forget this act (sic)."

"Then keep your eye steadily on the lions, and keep them moving."

"In driving them, drive them always from the right."

"Be quick and careful."

"That Mrs. James made no out-cry indicating fear while she was working the lions until just at the moment she was struck down was the contention of Jerry Barnes."

"I told her that she didn't do it right," said Barnes as he testified concerning the accident and the incident leading up to it. "She was letting the lions get on each side of her. I said that it didn't look right. She then said that she wanted to go in again and have me show her how to do it. She got in the cage all right at the rehearsal. She did better this time. She whipped the lions then up in the end of the cage. Then she

stood there, stepping back from them, with her hands down at her side and kind of looking over her shoulder. She was talking to her husband and said something about his minding his own business." The accident then occurred he stated.

"Did she cry out before the lions reached her?"

"Not a word."

"Had she made any exclamation or any demand upon you that she desired to get out of the cage?"

"No, sir."

"Then the ownership of the lions was gone into. Jerry Barnes claimed to have purchased them, his brother Al G. Barnes acting as his agent and paying over the money to the importer and also making the preliminary arrangements for purchasing the beasts. Later he sold the lions to Al G. Barnes' wife, Dollie Barnes, because he was not making a financial success."

"Al G. Barnes testified concerning the ownership of the lions. He stated that all through he had acted simply as an agent for his brother because he could get the animals cheaper by representing to the dealer that it was his brother that wanted the lions than if the brother had attempted by himself to make the purchase. He also had advertised the lions for sale under his name because he was better known. Later his wife purchased them. He reiterated the claim that Mrs. James and her husband were in the employ of his brother and not himself."

"With sobs racking her frame Mrs. James related last evening the suffering that she sustained as the result of being torn by the lions. She leaned over on the back of the witness chair and not until several minutes had elapsed could she recover herself sufficiently to continue with her testimony."

"She stated that Jerry Barnes had first proposed that she work with the lions."

"She stated that a small stool had been placed on a box in order that she might

enter the cage. 'I told them that I would never go in that cage again unless the mode of egress and ingress was remedied for I was afraid I might break a limb,' she stated.

"Jerry Barnes grasped my arm and he said he would show me how to get in and out all right. Then my husband said, 'Little girl, you will please me if you never go in there again.' He protested and I told him to shut up, that I was working under the directions of my employer. I didn't like the way the lions acted. They tried to continually get between me and the door. They would get behind and circle around me. I asked to be let out but Jerry Barnes told me to stamp my foot and subdue them. I asked twice. Then the large lion struck me. He struck me on the limb and knocked me down."

"Did the small lion jump too?"

"No, sir, he was back of the big lion."

"What did you do?"

"I threw my right arm to protect my eyes. He growled constantly."

"How long was it until Jerry Barnes rescued you?"

"It seemed ages to me but it must have been only a few minutes."

"Were you at any time unconscious?"

"Not at any time."

"What effect did the wounds have upon your rest and sleep at night?"

"It is hard for me to sleep."

"What effect did the wounds on the head have?"

"I have terrible headaches three or four times a month."

"On the whole Mrs. James was a very good witness and on the cross examination could not be shaken to any appreciable extent from the assertions to which she clung."

Al G. Barnes told the *Journal* reporter, "They are always brave until they get hurt and then they want somebody to pay for it. As a matter of fact Mrs. James was anxious to try out with the lions. She wanted the notoriety that comes with this sort of an act. I think her husband is responsible for this whole business. I think he is back of it all."

The trial came to a sudden halt on the third day. According to the *Journal*: "Defeat was staring her in the face when the case was withdrawn and it was only the hasty interposition of the attorneys for Mrs. James that kept Judge John Pollock from instructing the jury to bring in a verdict against the plaintiff."



ENGAGEMENT—EXTRAORDINARY AUDITORIUM

5 NIGHTS AND 3 MATINEES—STARTING
MONDAY
FEBRUARY 25TH



**AL. G. BARNES
WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS**
Biggest and Best Now on Tour. A Rare Collection
of Strange Wild Animal Acts.

PROF. SONEWALL'S
Troupe of Arabian Stallion Ponies
MILLE BARNES
And Her Group of High School Dogs
EDDIE KELLEY
Equestrian—Dog and Monkey Trainers
JACKSON & JERRY
Smallest Ponies in the World—10 Inches High
Wise Maud, Mule and Clown

AL. G. BARNES
His Famous Laughing and Talking Pony Rides
MILLE BARNES
And Her Riding Lion Nero
Only Riding Lion in the World
DAINTY DOLLY CASTLE
The Dancing Girl in the Lion's Den
MILLE MARTHA FLORINE
And Her Untamable Lion Caesar Waller



MATINEES TUESDAY—THURSDAY
AND FRIDAY
SPECIAL
MATINEE—FRIDAY FOR LADIES ONLY

PRICES Night 25c, 35c and 50c
Matinees 25 Cents
SEATS NOW ON SALE AT STANFELD'S DRUG STORE

RUTH GREY

NATURE'S MOST MYSTIC PHENOMENON
SHE DIVINES YOUR THOUGHTS

Most wonderful to say
the least. In fact the strong-
est performance I ever wit-
nessed—Mr. HUBBARD,
Chicago Tribune, Novem-
ber 17th.

She made good her claim
to being a Mystic Phenome-
non. Truly wonderful—
AMY LESJUE, Chicago
Daily News, November 17.

SHE
KNOWS
ALL

Entirely beyond one's
comprehension. So strange,
so mystifying, so wonderful.
Each one of her answers is
just right—BURNS MAN-
TLE, Chicago Inter-Ocean,
November 17th.

THE
WOMAN
OF
MYSTERY

IF IN DOUBT ASK RUTH GREY

Barnes ad in the February 23, 1907 Topeka *State Journal*. Kansas State Historical Society.

"After both sides had rested Judge Pollock made a summary of the evidence which had been brought out in the testimony and indicated clearly that he thought whatever blame attached to the accident was upon the shoulders of Mrs. James herself. After making brief remarks along this line he turned to give his instructions to the jury. A hasty consultation ensued among the attorneys for the plaintiff and then James W. Orr, one of the attorneys, arose and asked permission of the court to withdraw the suit. This was granted over the objections of the opposing counsel after suitable bond had been offered.

"A case such as this is met with but once in a lifetime was the opinion that Judge Pollock expressed of unusual features which attached to the suit.

"This of course in many respects is a most singular case. Here is the complainant who was very seriously injured: that is not disputed. She was seriously injured in a hazardous profession. The cause that induces the holding of such performances as these is the desire of the people to see a person, particularly a woman, placed in such a position. It is by reason of the spectacle of a woman in a cage of lions, that the animals are considered dangerous, that attract men, women and children. If it had been sheep or some equally tame and domestic animal there would have been no attraction in the performance.

"It is true that when one enters on a service that is hazardous they take all the responsibility of such hazards. My judgment is, on the matter of the contract between C. W. Parker and Creamer and Tyler, when taking in connection all of the facts, was a lease. C. W. Parker was the

manufacturer of the equipment of shows. He does not pretend to operate a show but he makes contracts to furnish equipment to those who operate shows. Parker is too far removed from this case. This woman did not accept employment with the animal show with the understanding that Parker was to compensate her. Her employment was with Jerry Barnes and Al G. Barnes. Coming down to Tyler and Creamer they are in charge of the equipment. I do not think that the relation of these parties is as the plaintiff contends. Creamer and Tyler made a contract with Jerry Barnes to bring this lot into the aggregation. She could not have held them for compensation. Now as far as the Parker Amusement company is concerned there is of course no such person. It was just a convenient name used to advertise these aggregation of shows."

"Judge Pollock then stated that Mrs. James had apparently stood four or five feet from the cage door and beyond calling out that she wanted to get out of the cage that she made no move to escape. If there was any evidence to show that she attempted to escape, I wouldn't question her complaint a minute. But she relied on herself; she simply took the risk on herself."

On the first day of the trial the *Journal* headed its story with a limerick.

"There was a young lady of Nigre,
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.
They came back from the ride.
With the lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger."

The trial revealed that she really did have a name of her own, but no one told Ethel Kirkpatrick James that she could be hurt.

No one.

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Inc., Topeka, Kansas.

BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS



THE COL. COOK CONSOLIDATED SHOWS, AND FIELD MUSEUM.

THE NEATEST AND BEST WAGON SHOW ON THE ROAD.

COL. COOK, PROP'R.
FRANK STOWE, MANAGER.

No No No No

The Col. Cook Consolidated Shows was a typical 25 cent wagon show. The letterhead is printed in red and was probably used in 1892.

CIRCUS ROUTE CARDS WANTED

From the 1880s to 1993

Also diaries and letters from agents and performers with portions of routes in them. Especially interested in small mud shows.

Help me document circus history.

Please advise me what you have. I will buy or trade for cards I need. Will also Xerox route information that you are willing to share.

Ted Bowman
410 Hillside Court
Hugo, OK 74743
405-326-7733



Twenty-First Annual Tour

Route No. 1

Day	Mo.	Date	Town	Mileage	Highways
Sat.	Apr.	23	Aurora, Mo.	38	U. S. 60
SUNDAY					
Mon.	Apr.	25	Springfield, Mo.	38	U. S. 60
Tue.	Apr.	26	Lebanon, Mo.	52	U. S. 66
Wed.	Apr.	27	Eldon, Mo.	47	S. S. - US 64
Thur.	Apr.	28	Jefferson City, Mo.	81	U. S. 54
Fri.	Apr.	29	Sedalia, Mo.	61	U. S. 50
Sat.	Apr.	30	Columbia, Mo.	71	US 66 - US 40
Sun.	May	1	Moberly, Mo.	36	U. S. 68
Mon.	May	2	Macon, Mo.	22	U. S. 68
Tues.	May	3	Quincy, Ill.	32	US 24 - US 24
Wed.	May	4	Keosauqua, Ia.	42	US 24 - US 61
Thur.	May	5	Pt. Madison, Ia.	23	U. S. 61
Fri.	May	6	Burlington, Ia.	19	U. S. 61
Sat.	May	7	Masonville, Ia.	50	U. S. 61
Total Mileage				613	

Sterling Bros. Circus

KING BAILE

Thank You

1938



WINTER QUARTERS, YORK, S. C.

SEASON 1933

OFFICIAL ROUTE CARD No. 2

SECOND WEEK

April 17—Beckley, W. Va.	112 mi.
April 18—Charleston, W. Va.	72 mi.
April 19—Spencer, W. Va.	54 mi.
April 20—Parkersburg, W. Va.	51 mi.
April 21—Sistersville, W. Va.	46 mi.
April 22—Marietta, Ohio	44 mi.

THIRD WEEK

April 24—Wheeling, W. Va.	87 mi.
April 25—Wheeling, W. Va.	00 mi.
April 26—Cambridge, Ohio	51 mi.
April 27—New Philadelphia, Ohio	57 mi.
April 28—Weillsburg, Ohio	65 mi.
April 29—Holidays Cove, W. Va.	15 mi.
Total Mileage	845 mi.

Ira Haynes, Mail Agent

This paper was delivered before the Circus Historical Society convention in Washington, D. C., April 21-25, 1982.

The ship *Bengal* landed in Philadelphia in June, 1821 from Calcutta. Included in its cargo was a male elephant described by a newspaper as being of "uncommon size, color and beauty."¹ It was the third male elephant to reach America and is known to us today as Tippoo Sultan. Columbus was the first male to reach these shores, and he did so in 1817. In November, 1819 Horatio was unloaded from the ship of the same name. Horatio fell through a bridge in September, 1820, thus when Tippoo Sultan landed he was one of two males in the country. The males had been preceded by three females, none of which were very large. Columbus and Tippoo Sultan were both over eight feet in height and in advertisements their size was always featured.

Portrait of Tippoo Sultan c. 1865. Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum.

We do not know who it was that imported Tippoo Sultan, but we do know that he was not given that name at once. He was initially exhibited as a single attraction at the Black Horse Inn in Philadelphia on July 18, 1821 under the name Tippoo Saib.² We find him with that name in Georgetown, D. C. in October and Frederick, Maryland in November. He was added to an existing menagerie in Baltimore in December, 1821 where his name was not advertised, he being described as "the largest male elephant in America."³ However, in early May, 1822 the menagerie moved to 462 Broadway in New York and it was here that he was referred to by the name he carried to his death, Tippoo Sultan.

The use of the two names, Tippoo Saib and Tippoo Sultan, makes sense to us when we realize that they are from the same source and were two versions of a man's name. Tippoo Sultan was the Sultan of Mysore, an Indian state, from 1782 to 1799. Tippoo is eighteenth-century usage; today the word is translated as "Tipu," meaning tiger in the Canarese language.

Elephants exhibited in America in the first half of the nineteenth century had names derived from ships (Columbus, Horatio, Helen McGregor), from antiquity

TIPPOO SULTAN

THE MAN AND THE BEAST

By Stuart Thayer



(Hannibal, Virginius) and from history (Pizarro, Bolivar). Of those possibly named after persons (the two Bettys, Caroline, Flora and Ann) we do not know whose wives or daughters were being honored. However, with Tippoo Sultan, Hyder Ali (imported 1832) and Tippoo Saib (imported 1840) we have the only instance of three elephant names derived from one human family.

Hyder Ali (1722-1782) was a man of humble birth, who rose through the ranks of the army and, apparently with some piratical assistance, made himself Sultan of Mysore. He fought the British twice in the First and Second Mysore Wars.

He was a dedicated Anglophobe, apparently because of constant British

pressure on his personal expansionistic ambitions. He successfully transmitted his hatred of the English to his son, Tippoo Saib or Tippoo Sultan. The son also involved himself in two wars against the English, in 1790 and 1799. He was the loser in both confrontations and was killed in his palace at the conclusion of the second war.

Just as Hyder Ali and his son Tippoo Sultan were Anglophobes, so were the importers of the elephants. In 1821 when the beast was brought to America, it was but four years since the War of 1812 had ended and only a generation since the Revolution. Anti-British feeling was still very strong in this country. It softened somewhat in the 1840's as English capital was sought to finance our railroads, but gained strength again at the time of the Civil War, at least in the

North. In some quarters it did not fade until the two countries were allied in the First World War. What better way to indicate Anglophobia than to give an Asian animal the name of an Asian enemy of the British?

That this was an original thought with the menagerie men is not so. A privateer paid for by Philadelphia merchants to fight in the Revolution was named *Hyder Ali*. The Navy had a frigate named *Seringapatam*, which was the capital of Mysore, and its figurehead was a likeness of Tippoo Sultan.

To return to the elephant, the show he graced in 1822 was advertised as the "Great American Caravan of Living Animals." It consisted of a male and female camel, a lion, a Barbary ape, an anteater and the Dancing African Lady—an ape that performed on the tight rope. This group was quite possibly successor to the earliest American menagerie. During 1816-1821 it was advertised as "Grand, Rich and Rare Collection of Living Animals" and before that, in 1813-1816, as "Museum of Living Animals," the first travelling menagerie found in which more than two species were exhibited. The stability of the stock in these three

Handbill used to advertise the 1825 Grand Caravan of Living Animals.

Grand Caravan OF LIVING ANIMALS.

TO BE EXHIBITED AT *Plaza Surin in Washington on the 21st of 1825 for six days only.*

No. 1.—Tippoo Sultan

Tippo Sultan

No. 2.—The Lion of Africa

Sultan

The great Hunting ELEPHANT.

No. 3.—The Tiger of Bengal

No. 4.—The Elephant of India

THE MAMMOTH LION.

No. 5.—The Lion of America

No. 6.—The Elephant of India

The exhibition will be accompanied with good Music.

ADMITTANCE 25 Cents; Children under 10 years of age, 1/2 of price.
 *Hours of Admittance from 10 in the Morning until 2 in the Evening

B. Mansell, Printer, Court House Square, Lancaster.

endeavors makes it quite likely that these were the same show over the years.

We do not know who the proprietors of these three titles were. The only name that appears in conjunction with them is that of a Mr. Brown in Washington in 1819. This might have been Christopher Brown, the oldest of that name to go into the business, but we have no proof of it.

The menagerie went into Albany on October 25, 1822 where they enlarged a building at Green and Division Streets, opposite the state capitol, and stayed the winter. The 1823 road season was spent mostly in western New York and they returned to the Albany building in October. It was in this winter, 1823-1824, that they exhibited in conjunction with J. W. Bancker's circus for the first combination of circus and menagerie on record. Both shows could be seen for one admission. It was also during this winter that Joseph Martin's name is first mentioned as Tippoo Sultan's keeper.

The 1824 season found the menagerie in New England and their winter quarters were established in Philadelphia in December. By this time Martin had taught the elephant some tricks. The most interesting one was when Martin would stand on the elephant's tusks and be tossed by a nod of the beast's head onto its back. Martin would turn a somersault in flight.

The other animals in the collection changed over the years, but Tippoo Sultan's name was featured in most advertisements, enabling us to keep a watch on the show's movements. They visited all the settled parts of the country and the elephant had a sort of fame, which he shared with the great Columbus. The title was usually "Grand Caravan of Living Animals," but is occasionally seen as "Grand Caravan with Tippoo Sultan." Research has thus far not discovered another example of a menagerie title containing the name of one of the exhibits.

In 1826 Martin, Finch and Company took out the license in Rochester, New York indicating that Joseph Martin was now part-owner of the show and that Edward Finch was his partner. In the practice of the time it seems doubtful that they owned the elephant, it being more common to lease them. Finch, for instance, had leased Betty II from Hackaliah Bailey in 1823.

According to the advertising Tippoo had grown to a height of ten feet by 1832. He was also said to be twenty-six years old, indicating a birth in 1806. In 1832 and 1833 he was leased to Hopkins and Company, and in 1834 quite possibly to June, Hopkins and Company. June, Hopkins had two elephants, but no mention of their names has been found. The man who leased them the beast was Nathan Howes, a supposition based on an ad-

vertisement offering the menagerie for sale in January, 1834.

The show was listed as having twenty wild animals (six of which were monkeys), twenty wax figures, seventeen horses and a pony. It was carried in eight wagons.⁴ The ad was signed by Bailey Howes, as agent for the concern, and it is this connection we use to bring us to Nathan Howes.

Eighteen thirty-five saw the introduction of the Zoological Association and its monopoly of the menagerie business. Of the twelve shows put on the road by the Association, six included circus troupes. Nathan Howes and Richard Sands combined their American Circus with the Tippoo Sultan menagerie for 1835 to become one of those six combined shows. They advertised it under one of the most ungainly titles ever used "Mammoth Elephant, Menagerie and Circus." Sands, one of those performers who could almost give an entire performance by himself, was riding master, juggler and bareback rider. He was one of five bareback riders advertised in the early 1830's. Tippoo Sultan was joined by the calf Hyder Ali, named after the real Tippoo's father, of course. Imported in December, 1832 Hyder Ali had spent 1833 and 1834 on the Raymond and Ogden menagerie. That the two were placed together because of their names is a possibility, though name changes were not at all unusual in those days, especially in regard to calves.

Tippoo was a docile beast for the most part. We read of but one reference to his running away and being consequently restrained. In comparison to Columbus, whose exploits were several times the stuff of newspaper comment, Tippoo was almost a lamb, despite his size.

Nathan Howes sold out or leased or somehow drew away from the Mammoth Menagerie after 1835. In 1836 it went out under the management of Noel E. Waring as the Mammoth Exhibition from the Zoo-

logical Institute, New York, probably a Waring and Raymond operation. It had no circus department and only Tippoo Sultan as elephant. He was on the same show in 1837, though Waring was not the manager, it being leased to Purdy, Welch, Macomber.

There is a reference to Tippoo dying in the Caribbean⁵ and if it is true, it must have happened in the winter of 1837-1838. There are no references to him in the United States after 1837. His namesake, Tippoo Saib, first appears in 1840, whether by importation or name change we don't know. Tippoo Saib roamed the country for thirty years and died in Connersville, Indiana in 1871. Of Hyder Ali, the calf, there is no record after 1837, which may mean he was renamed Tippoo Saib.

Of the man who hated the English, he is buried beside his father in their capitol, Seringapatam. In the Victoria and Albert Museum in London is a life-sized figure of a tiger which once belonged to Tippoo Sultan. It is an organ, which when cranked, emits growls like a wild animal, as well as the shrieks of its human victim, for the tiger has an Englishman by the throat and as the mechanism turns he bites him over and over. During the bombing in World War II the piece was rendered inoperable but prior to the war, apparently, children were constantly turning the crank on the thing to the dismay of readers in the Indian library in the next room. Thus, from beyond the grave, as it were, Tippoo Sultan continued to plague at least a few Englishmen.

Footnotes

1. *Ontario Repository* (Canandaigua, New York) June 19, 1821.
2. *Franklin Gazette* (Philadelphia) July 18, 1821.
3. *American* (Baltimore) December 11, 1821.
4. *Daily Chronicle* (Philadelphia) January 6, 1834.
5. John Dingess, unpublished ms., Hertzberg Collection, San Antonio, Texas.

Do You Travel? So Do We!

We can help with all your travel
arrangements. We think Circus.
We'd like you to think of us.

Circus Express

44 Woodside Ave, Winthrop MA 02152
800-541-7741

The season of 1893 was a long one for Harris' Nickel Plate Shows, beginning February 18, in Thibodaux, Louisiana, and ending in New Orleans, December 10. Five dates were played in Kansas.

An advertisement in the Ft. Scott *Weekly Monitor*, heralding the exhibitions of August 22, proclaimed the Harris aggregation, like all other shows, to be "The Greatest Show On Earth." It was "Immense Beyond Conception! Perfect in Every Detail! All Opposition Impossible!"

A unique feature was "A National Concentration of Feline Brilliancy. BRAIN POSSESSING LIONS!"

A handout in the *Monitor*, quoting the Helena, Arkansas, *Daily World* stated that "The public intuitively put down all ten and twenty cent shows as 'snides,' and generally correctly so, but there are exceptions, and Harris is certainly entitled to that distinction. There is not a 'rotten' feature about the entire entertainment."

No mention was made of the size of the Ft. Scott crowd or the quality of the exhibition after the show was gone.

If it were not for the following report there would be no proof that the show ever played Ft. Scott.

"During the rush for choice concert seats yesterday at the circus, a man evidently belonged to the show but had lost his bearings fell through a section of seats and acted as if he was pretty seriously hurt. He limped off and seemed to have an injured leg and arm. A lady with a baby in arms became an interested looker on at the accident and by too close attention missed seeing a stake which tripped her, causing her to drop the child on a stake and cutting its head."

In another column the *Monitor* ran a quote from the Nevada, Missouri, *Mail* stating that, "Frank Gordon, aged 14 years, passed through here this morning, en route for Joplin from Monroe City. He was in a terribly bruised condition, having been run over Monday night by a show team and wagon. He was bruised about the face, and left side and was in a serious condition. Young Gordon left Joplin about five months ago with the Harris Nickel Plate show, and remained with it until he met with his accident Monday night. He was gathering up straw at the show train, after the circus, when a team ran over him."

The Osage Mission *Journal* carried a handout concerning the exhibition there on August 23, which was used in every Kansas town.

ONLY BIG SHOW COMING Prodigal Profusion Of Princely Paraphernalia

Vol. I, Chapter Two, Part Two, 1893

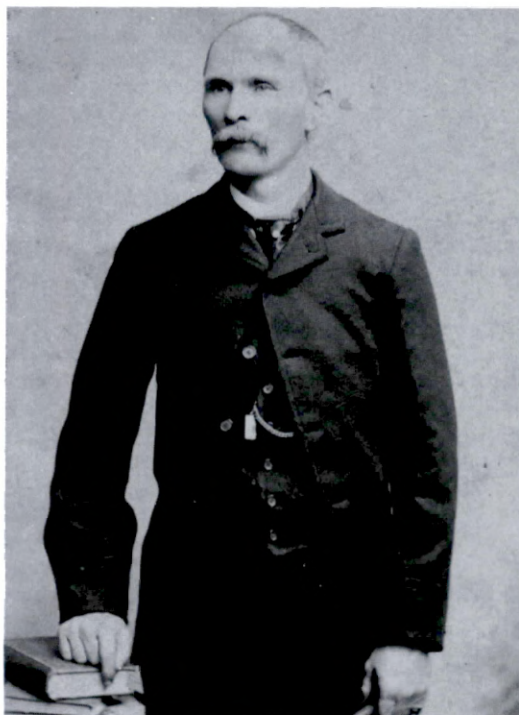
By Orin Copple King

Copyright © 1993 Orin Copple King

"W. H. Harris does not claim proprietorship to the 'greatest show on earth,' but he does claim to have one of the most novel and interesting performances ever given under canvas. Among the features to be seen only under the tents of the great Nickel Plate shows are the following: The Grande Entry of twelve milk-white horses; Senator, the equine marvel, the best broke trick and performing stallion in the country; Harris' world famous \$10,000 challenge den of performing lions, trained especially for this show, the largest in America, and the funniest knock-about clowns who ever entered a ring. These, and many other features, have combined to make the great Nickel Plate king of all popular price shows."

An ad in the *Journal* announced "Seats

William H. Harris. Mary Wilson collection.



for 10,000 at People's Popular Prices."

The Parsons *Sun* reported that on show day August 24, Harris circulated through the streets of Parsons an advertising wagon displaying a large bill board. The horses became frightened and ran away. On Morgan Avenue the team collided broadside with a moving locomotive and "the wagon was completely demolished, pieces being scattered in every direction. Fortunately the driver and the horses were uninjured."

The day in Parsons began with stormy weather but the clouds cleared and the show played to a good house in the afternoon and a "much larger crowd" at night. The *Sun* reported that, "The show, with the exception of some trained lions, is purely a circus performance, but in justice to the management be it said that it presents one of the best ring performances ever seen in this city, and is worth the price of admission at any time."

Most of Harris' handouts claimed to be taken from other newspapers such as the Kokomo *Tribune*, Kokomo *Dispatch*, Richmond *Item*, Louisiana (Missouri) *Journal*, Owensboro *Daily Messenger* and Helena, Arkansas, *Daily World*.

The Kokomo *Tribune* was the most interesting, stating that, "The Nickel Plate has become famous through the country as the 'White Horse Show,' every horse and pony with the show being milk white."

An advertisement in the Chautauque *Times* for the exhibitions of August 25, made a few modest claims: "A Mastodonic Enterprise, Penetrating all climes Traversable, and at all times and Places the very Best. We have the best ring performance, introducing more celebrated performers, a more complete museum and menagerie of trained animals, both wild and domestic, and more new and novel features than other like organizations. Finer ring horses than owned by any other show in the world. Take Heed and Prepare to Visit It!"

"The Harris Nickle-Plate show," according to the Chetopa *Advance*, "gave an exhibition here last Saturday [August 26]. They made a fine parade and gave a good show, and all who attended it were well pleased with the performances."

The five Kansas towns played by Harris' Nickel-Plate Shows, Circus, Museum and Menagerie of Trained Wild Animals were August 22, Ft. Scott; August 23, Osage Mission; Au-

gust 24, Parsons; August 25, Chanute; August 26, Chetopa.

The 1893 Route Book of Mullen's Big 25¢ Railroad show reports the aggregation at Brunswick, Missouri, September 12, and Huntsville the following day.

The La Cygne *Journal-Clarion* ran an ad on September 9, announcing exhibitions on September 12: "MULLEN'S Big 25 CENT R. R. SHOWS!"

"The Biggest Show That Will Visit You This Season. Crowded To The Doors Where ever We Show. We have the Best Clowns and Funniest ones. We have the finest Military Band that ever traveled with a Show. WE MAKE NO STREET DISPLAY. PROF. HACKER'S BAND Will parade the principal streets the day of the exhibition to announce the arrival of this GRAND COLOSSAL SHOW which is under our mammoth tent and not in the street. NO THIEVES! NO TOUGHS! Best Gymnasts, High Wire Artists, Mid Air Performers, Trapeze Artists, Contortionists, Slack Wire Performers, Oriental Jugglers, Lady Gymnasts, Tight Rope Dancers, Slack Wire Beauties, Tumblers, Leapers, Etc., Etc. PROF. WORMWOOD And his Troupe of Trained Dogs. RAZOR the only Dog Living that walks a tight wire. PROF. JOHN KIMBRELL With his \$5,000 Troupe of Trained Horses. LA CYGNE, KANSAS September 12, 1893."

On the 16th the *Journal-Clarion* reported that, "Our circus did not arrive as advertised last Tuesday. We understand the sheriff of Johnson county has assumed control, and our advertising account reads 'dr. to experience.'"

The Pleasanton *Herald* and the Pleasanton *Observer* both ran ads for Mullen's show similar to the one above. After circus day on September 13, neither paper reported the absence or presence of Mullen's Big 25¢ Railroad Show, but the *Observer* did comment that "Wednesday was the driest and hottest day of the year."

"The most Intensely Interesting Exhibition on the Globe," was "Coming On Their special train" to Colony for performances on September 14, 1893, according to an advertisement in the *Free Press*. Coming was Sanger & Lent's Great International Allied Shows.

No names appeared in the ad but the reader was assured that the show presented "The Very Best artists of America, Japan, Europe & Arabia." Other features listed were: "The Rarest Wild Beast Gathering That Ever Invited Attention! The Only GREAT MARINE SHOW! ever perfected for travel. GRAND CONVOCATION OF LIFE! Collected at an Enormous Expense. An Acceptable Innovation in Amusement Entirely Revolutionizing The



Mike Mullen's 1893 circus traveled on a 50 foot sleeper and a 60 foot tunnel car. It used an 80 foot big top with two 30 foot middles.

Efforts of Others. Every Where Acknowledged Great Feature Show And Specialty Exhibitions. A Sumptuous Wonderland Festival! A Rich Rare and Moral Entertainment. A CENTURY IN ADVANCE OF ALL CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITORS."

There was no charge to watch the aeronaut ascend to the heavens for in the ad, emphasized by italics, was the admonition, "Don't forget the FREE BALLOON ASCENSION and parachute leap daily."

Admission was "the Usual Price."

The coming of Sanger & Lent was noticed in Neosho Falls, about 15 miles from Colony. The *Post* commented that, "Sanger & Lent's is billed for Colony next Thursday. This presumably is a new outfit as the name is not a familiar one to any of the circus going people."

The *Free Press* offered no information on the quality of the performance or the size of the audience, but did report the gambling.

"Quite a number of our citizens and some of the farmers of this vicinity were roped in by the fakirs of Sanger & Lent's show. Singular as the case may be, the victims were no spring chickens."

Complaints of circus gambling appeared frequently in Kansas newspapers, but the editor of the *Free Press* gave it a different twist:

"After the show was over,
After they'd left the town,
Me thought I heard a wail,
A chorus of dismal sound,

"And I heard an old man say,
In deep distress and woe,
Oh! for my fifteen dollars,
My cake is turned to dough.

"I guess I am a greenhorn,
Oh! 'tis a sad, sad tale;
Of number ten I was so sure,
Then the darn thing had to fail.

"But my eye-teeth now are cut;
And my eyes are opened wide.
I could kick myself
O'er a ten acre lot,
To think how they took my hide.
"No more will you see me trying
My hand in a game of chance,
For I wasn't on to their racket,
And now my name is P-A-N-T-S."

As a parting shot the *Free Press* offered a "Moral: Don't monkey with the bandwagon unless you have a horn."

"The sharpers around the circus that was at Colony one day last week robbed Clark Smith of \$10. He says they robbed other farmers of at least \$200. Which proves two things; first, that circus sharpers know their own game better than anybody else does; and second, that some farmers have—or had—a good deal of money in spite of the hard times. --Iola Register."

Sanger & Lent played Humboldt on September 15. The ad in the Colony newspaper was used in every town billed. In addition a few handouts appeared in the Humboldt *Union*.

"The circus event of the season will occur at Humboldt September 15 when Sanger & Lent's International Allied Shows make its advent as above that there is a treat in store for the lovers of nature in the great animal display and the very exciting sports of the leading lights of the circus profession there is no doubt (sic)."

The following handout ran in a different column: "THE COMING CIRCUS.

"From all accounts Sanger & Lent have reached the summit in attraction and have an exhibition without a peer on either Continent. Among the many wonders there is one in particular worthy of special mention, the baby elephants. These are the first ever known to be given birth in the United States. Efforts have been and are yet being made in the Zoological Gardens of Europe to propagate the elephant, without success however, as the Pachyderm has never before been known to breed in captivity. They nest in the most inaccessible recesses of the jungles. While it is comparatively easy to trap, or with the aid of a decoy elephant, procure a full grown beast, the attempt to get a baby is attended with extreme danger, as frequently a whole herd of el-



elephants is sacrificed by the hunters in obtaining a baby as the elephant will fight to the death in protection of their young. Consequently a baby elephant is of more value than thirty full grown ones in either Europe or America. The big show will be at Humboldt September 15."

Only four towns in Kansas were billed, but nowhere did any paper comment on the presence of elephants.

The *Union* commented that, "The 200 feet of billboard on the north and west side of the Park, for Sanger & Lent's show, is quite an attraction for the old and the young. The art of show printing has reached a standard of high excellence."

An advertisement and two handouts ran in the *Humboldt Herald*.

After the show had come and gone, the *Union* reported, "We have seen shows before that had some skin games for the unwary, but the Sanger & Lent's outfit took the cake. It seemed that every man with the concern was working some kind of a swindle. The victims here are numerous, and no doubt if another such a fake came along next week these same people would be trying to 'get even.'"

The *Fredonia Alliance Herald* ran five handouts and a two-column ad heralding the exhibitions of September 16. Two of the handouts named performers. Named were the "high salaried aerialists," the Leo's, and Mlle. Bennett, "a graceful and daring equestrienne."

"Sanger & Lent's show was poorly attended here last Saturday," according to the *Alliance Herald*. "The performances, however, were fully up to the usual standard and the riding was superior; as a menagerie it was a failure."

Moline was billed for exhibitions on September 18. The *Moline Republican*

Shell game in progress on Sanger & Lent, a Joe B. McMahon enterprise. Pfenning Archives.

was liberal with its columns and ran several handouts, the most interesting of which follows: "The Great Circus.

"That the Printer's Art keeps pace with modern progress, in fact in advance of it, can be seen by an inspection of Sanger & Lent's advertising material; by far the finest paper ever posted in our city. Jno. J. Holland, the globe trotter and veteran circus agent, says this show has eight hundred and forty kinds, all different size show bills, from 10 by 28 inches to 7 feet by 100. The American printer excels in every particular. The Great Shows will exhibit here September 18."

In spite of the "840 different" bills, Moline did not see the circus.

The *Courant* of nearby Howard reported that, "The circus which was to show at Moline Monday, failed to put in an appearance, creditors swooped down upon the aggregation at Fredonia where it is now in charge of the sheriff."

The *Moline Republican* stated that the show "was detained at Fredonia through some misunderstanding concerning transportation changes."

The *Republican*, to the credit of Sanger & Lent, reported that, "The managers stopped here long enough to pay all their bills."

The four Kansas towns billed by Sanger & Lent's Great International Shows in 1893, were: September 14, Colony; September 15, Humboldt; September 16, Fredonia; September 18, Moline (Blown).

On August 15, 1893, Muscotah was blessed, or cursed, by the exhibitions of a

small show with a strange name—Morris' South Before the War and Original Darkey Town Circus. Without the show's own claims it might not have been labeled a circus at all. The *Muscotah Record* carried the company's advertisement on August 11: "Only Big Show this Season! Circus, Minstrel and Comedy Combined MUSCOTAH, TUESDAY, AUG. 15 Morris' 'South Before the War' And Original Darkey Town Circus. Fifty People—Two Bands! Fun, Music, Contortion all Under One Canvas! A GRAND STREET PARADE AT 12:30! Doors open at 1 and 7 p. m. Come Early!"

Scattered through the news columns were several short statements.

"Morris' 'South Before the War' is absolutely the funniest show ever circulated."—*Kansas City Star*. Muscotah next Tuesday, the 15th.

"Bright, beaming and bewildering is Morris' 'South Before the War' says the *Leavenworth Times*. Muscotah August 15th.

"A Muscotah man who has seen the show that will be here Tuesday says it is good."

The *Record* identified the owner of the Darky Town Circus as Rose Fisher, "a notorious Atchison colored woman."

Also advertised on August 11, was Walt McCafferty's Great Golden Shows for performances in Muscotah on August 19.

McCafferty's bill posters were in town on the 11th and, according to the *Record*, "covered up with their own posters those of the Morris show. In some instances they simply put their dates to the Morris bills. The most independent scoundrel on earth is the circus bill poster. No 'fraternal feeling' exists between members of the circus profession."

After show day the *Record* reported, "We like to give credit where credit is due but there is very little due 'Morris' South Before the War and Original Darkey Town Circus' that played here to light business last Tuesday. Muscotah has seen many rotten combinations but for all round slimness this certainly takes the cake. We like a poor show occasionally but this suits too well. The only meritorious feature was the roast they gave the McCafferty show for covering up their bills. Most of the people were from Atchison."

The *Record* commented that, "The Morris circus carried an elegant little band."

The *Centralia Journal* had strong words for the Darky Town Circus: "A show billed 'Morris South Before the War' pitched their tent here Tuesday afternoon [August 22]. The performers consist of a gang of crap-shooting, chicken steeling (sic), bunko steering, drift wood catching

niggers from Atchison and Kansas City bottoms. Among them were a few elm peelers, possum hunters, ginsang diggers, clay eating white men from the paw-paw patches of Missouri. The paper they are putting up, is no doubt paper given them by some stranded one horse dog show. They can neither dance nor sing. The performances consists of massacreing (sic) stale jokes with gray whiskers. Look out for them, and when they strike your town lock up your smoke house, get a shot gun and not allow them to pitch their tent. They are worse than frauds."

No mention has been found elsewhere on the Original Darcy Town Circus.

Walt McCafferty's Great Golden Shows, Huge World's Museum, Oriental Egyptian Caravan and Royal Japanese Circus opened the season of 1893 on May 6, at Sabetha, Kansas.

"Mr. McCafferty has been with us all winter," according to the *Sabetha Republican Herald*, "and has built one of the finest, cleanest, handsomest outfits that it has ever been our pleasure to look at. He has one of the largest, most costly twenty-five cent shows ever exhibited and the best performers money can procure—every one a star who has been with the leading exhibitions of the world, also trained ponies, donkeys (sic), dogs, etc. On the day of exhibition there will be a grand street parade of gold and splendor blocks in length—handsome knights and queens on prancing steeds, beautiful chariots of white and gold, blooded stock, bands of music and funny figures—all to be at Sabetha May 6. Two performances, at 1 and 7 p.m. Admission twenty-five cents."

An advertisement in the *Republican Herald* called the Great Golden, "A Show to Talk About."

It was a "brilliant coruscation reflecting the lights of America's brightest Arenic stars—every one a star from leading exhibitions. Hazardous Tight Rope Artists. Grotesque and Funny Clowns. The Most Wonderful Contortionists. The Best High Wire Performers The Most Fearless Aerial Artists. Most Wonderful of Trained Animals"

The greatest feature of the show was Ogawa's Royal Japanese Circus. The advertisement stated, "So signally in advance of All other Japanese performers who are exhibiting or ever have exhibited in America, and whose artistic, lithe, graceful and adroit performances are revelations in the gymnastic art. As startling, astonishing and amusing as they are novel, special and unprecedented. These sons and daughters of the Flowery Kingdom can but win the medal of unlimited superiority over all other artists of their profession no matter of what land or na-

BIG 25-CENT SHOW.

Walt McCafferty's

Great Golden Shows, Huge World's Museum Oriental Egyptian Caravan and Royal Japanese Circus,

WILL EXHIBIT AT

Wetmore, Monday, July 17

Best 25c Aggregation Ever Exhibited!

A grand street parade. A show to talk about. A brilliant coronation re-creating the lights of America's brightest Arenic stars—every one a star from leading exhibitions.

Hazardous Tight-Rope Artists!

Grotesque and funny clowns. The most wonderful contortionists. The best high-wire performers. The most wonderful aerial artists. Most wonderful of trained animals.

OGAWA'S

Royal Japanese Circus

"No signally in advance of all other Japanese performers who are exhibiting or ever have exhibited in America, and whose artistic, lithe, graceful and adroit performances are revelations in the gymnastic art. As startling, astonishing and amusing as they are novel, special and unprecedented. These sons and daughters of the Flowery Kingdom can but win the medal of unlimited superiority over all other artists of their profession no matter what land or nation they are the management of the Great Golden Shows look upon them as an invaluable augmentation to their already formidable and world vanquishing great double company of stellar performers."

Before the Mikado's Court in Japan

"This memorable corps of skilled and wonderful Japanese have held the proud distinction of frequently appearing at the Mikado's Court by special command and are now making a limited tour through America by permission of that potentate."

L. P. MILLARD'S

BAND OF FINE SOLOISTS!

"The finest and most proficient musical organization with any limited skill blues. They will disconcert elegant selections from the most popular music of the day and will present a musical program of rich and rare excellence and finish with brilliant grace."

GRAND STREET PARADE

At 12:30. Worth Coming Miles to See!

Positively exhibits, rain or shine. Two performances daily. Open at 1 and 7 o'clock p.m. Don't forget the date, Wetmore, July 17th.

Admission, - 25 Cents.

McCafferty ad in the July 14, 1893 *Ne-maha County Spectator*. Kansas State Historical Society.

tionality and the management of the Great Golden Shows look upon them as an invaluable augmentation to their already formidable and world vanquishing great double company of stellar performers.

"Before the Mikado's Court in Japan.

"This memorable corps of skilled and wonderful Japanese have held the proud distinction of frequently appearing at the Mikado's Court by special command and are now making a limited tour through America by permission of that potentate."

Music was provided by L. P. Miller's [more frequently spelled Millar] band of "fine soloists." Admission 25 Cents.

Following the initial exhibitions the *Republican-Herald* reported that, "Several thousand people were present and all came away enthusiastic in their praise. A representative of the *REPUBLICAN-HERALD* witnessed the evening exhibition, and takes pleasure in testifying to the excellent character of the performance throughout. There is no second rate talent in the company. While the show does not

claim to be the largest, it is certainly one of the best that is likely to travel through Kansas this summer. But the point to which we would more particularly refer, is the excellent reputation which Mr. McCafferty has made for himself while a resident of the community. We can cheerfully recommend him as a man of integrity and withal a gentleman. He assures us that no gambling devices of any nature whatever will be permitted to follow his show. We but voice the sentiments of the entire community in wishing him a successful and profitable season."

At Seneca on May 9, a balloon ascension was the highlight of the day. Prof. Wynn, an independent aeronaut, had scheduled an ascension for April 29, but due to bad weather the flight was rescheduled for Saturday, May 6. Another postponement resulted when a guy pole fell and broke the balloon. On Tuesday, circus day, the ascension was a glorious success. The balloon rose to 4,000 feet before the aeronaut cut loose and floated down "gracefully and safely." Prof. Wynn was 'not a member of McCafferty's company, but the crowd he assembled was a boon to the circus.

On June 2 the *Seneca Courier-Democrat* reported that Prof. Wynn was killed in an accident at Manhattan, May 27.

The Axtell *Anchor*, speaking of the exhibitions in that village on May 10, claimed, "It was a big crowd come to a poor show."

The exhibitions of May 11, at Beattie, were reported by *Williamson's Beattie Eagle*. "The tent was crowded with people who seemed to be satisfied with what they saw. It was a little thin, but as the price was only 25 cents there was but little grounds for complaint."

The *Bee*, reporting the exhibitions at Frankfort on May 12, stated that, "There was a very large attendance at both the afternoon and evening performances. While the show was perhaps not as good as was expected, there was some very good acting, and the majority of those attending were not disposed to grumble. It is a fact, however, that there was entirely too much 'snide' about it to deserve it much praise."

The *Onaga Herald* ran a handout that was used frequently by McCafferty and was lifted directly from that portion of his newspaper ad pertaining to Ogawa's Royal Japanese circus.

Onaga was a good town for the Great Golden Shows. The *Herald* reported that, "Last Saturday [May 13] there were crowds of people in town to do their week's trading and to see the show. Some of the stores were crowded all day, and the clerks worked down as never before.

It seemed as if everybody within a radius of 12 miles came to town."

The editor of the Olsburg *News-Letter* gave the show a little plug: "The show that exhibits in Olsburg next Tuesday [May 16] is said to be a first class concern, organized and managed by reputable citizens of Sabetha. By the way, when you come to town to see the circus you could make the printer right glad by remembering him in \$ub\$tanial \$ort of \$tyle! \$ee?"

McCafferty ran two different ads in the *Washington Register* for the exhibitions of May 22.

The day was less than satisfactory, according to the *Register*. "McCafferty's Great Golden Show did not show a mile of gold and splendor last Monday, owing to the drizzle and high wind. No attempt was made to give a tent performance; but when it was evident that the wind was not going to lay, the management secured the Opera House and gave pleasing entertainments both afternoon and evening to fair houses. McCafferty's is not one of the largest shows on earth, but next to the populist party it is the best 'two bit' show that has visited this part of Kansas for years."

McCafferty had no elephants, but this did not prevent him from using a cut of an elephant in some of his newspaper advertisements. The first elephant appeared in the *Courtland Register* ahead of the exhibitions there on Friday, May 26.

The *Jewell County Republican*, concerning the performances in Jewell City on May 27, declared that, "The Great Golden show didn't amalgamate with very much Jewell county silver." A steam-powered merry-go-round ended a week's stay in Jewell on circus day. The *Republican* reported that, "The merry-go-round cleared \$420 above all expenses in Jewell." McCafferty was a poor second.

On a rainy May 30, McCafferty played Downs. The show had sufficient cash to buy two double sets of harness from J. M. Saunders.

The advertisement in the *Osborne County Farmer*, heralding the Osborne exhibitions of May 31, featured five elephants in a pyramid and a calf standing on the ground.

"Walt McCafferty's 25-cent show gave two performances in Osborne yesterday." The *Farmer* explained that, "The animals had all escaped before the show landed here. The trapeze work was excellent, but the fool clowns monopolized too much time. The attendance was slim. The farmer very sensibly remained at home. The circus is in Alton to-day."

The *Osborne County News*, Osborne, reported that, "The show is the same one that traveled last year under the name of the Taylor circus, and pitched its tent for one day in Osborne, giving the people the best 25-cent circus that ever struck this country."

During the season of 1892, Walt McCafferty helped manage the F. J. Taylor Great American Double Circus.

The exhibitions at Gaylord on June 2, attracted a number of Kirwin people to McCafferty's show. Kirwin was the next stop after Gaylord. The *Gaylord Herald* explained that, "It was expected that the show would divide up here—as shows



usually do when they leave the large towns—part of it going to Kirwin and part to Smith Centre, and they desired to behold it in its gorgeous entirety."

The people of Kirwin were needlessly worried for there was not enough of McCafferty's show to divide in any proportion.

The June 10 *New York Clipper* reported that, "Roster of Walt McCafferty's Great Garden (sic) Shows, now touring Western Kansas and Colorado; P. S. McPherson, in charge; G. F. Brady, first assistant; Wm. Kellan, in charge of seats; Dick Boya, stake and chain; Wm. Gunnels, front door; Horton Jacks, Theo. Barretta, Minnie Minnetta, Sig. Harris, Al Bishop, Abe Bishop, Geo. Rehn, Clarence Clements, Ed C. Murphy, and T. Ogawa's Troupe of Royal Japanese."

The Great Golden Shows, after playing Smith Centre on June 5, entered Nebraska where it remained through July 15.

Wetmore saw the show on July 17. The show received a relatively lengthy report from the *Nemaha County Spectator*: "Dr.

Fitzgerald is the possessor of a young alligator. It was presented to him last Monday by Billy Wren, the proprietor of the side show. The animal is about three feet in length."

Noble Norman Humbert quit his job of pitching hay for "Pop" Gibbon and left with the circus.

"Maudie's Country Cousins.

"Maudie Wren, the little high wire walker, with the circus was certainly 'onto her job.' She successfully 'worked' a great number to buy her photographs and one party of young people from the country had become so enraptured with her charms that when they left the town in the evening a number of boys and girls in the wagon kept calling out 'Good-bye, Maude.' as long as they could see her. She had worked the whole crowd. They had never met her before but gladly gave up their money for the pleasure of her acquaintance. Maudie is but twelve years old. It is her boast that she can tell suckers as soon as she sees them and being a Horton girl probably accounts for her precocity."

"The McCafferty circus drew a large crowd to its afternoon performance, but the threatening aspect of the weather in the evening made the attendance rather slim."

According to the *Oskaloosa Independent*, "McCafferty's show arrived this morning [Friday, July 21] and has pitched its tents north of the Bliss House."

The *Independent*, following show day, reported that, "We believe the McCafferty show is entitled to some credit for the orderly manner in which the outfit conducted themselves last Friday. The show was fairly well attended, the management reporting that they would take away about a hundred dollars, as their net receipts."

When the show left Oskaloosa Will Meadows went with it.

The advertisement for July 24, in the *St. Marys' Star* carried a cut of an act that would have been a real eye-popper had it been true. The illustration showed a horse standing on the backs, Roman style, of two other galloping steeds.

The patrons at Eskridge had a disappointment on circus day July 27. The *Eskridge Star* carried the story: "McCafferty's Circus was here last Thursday and it was a very good 25 cent show. Owing to the rain they only gave a part of one performance. In the afternoon, during the performance a wind storm came up and a panic ensued. The tent was full, but in less than two minutes only a few canvas men were left. The spectators left via entrance under the canvas, over the top of the side curtains and through the dress-

ing rooms. Fortunately, but miraculously, no one was hurt during the wild rush to get away. No evening performance was given."

The July 29 *New York Clipper* reported again on McCafferty's show: "NOTES AND ROSTER OF McCAFFERTY'S GREAT GOLDEN SHOWS—Walter McCafferty, proprietor and manager; Mrs. McCafferty, treasurer; W. H. Rhen, in charge of side show; Chas. Ray (sic), leader of band, with twelve pieces; P. S. McPherson, in charge of stock, with twenty men; G. F. Brady, in charge of canvas

McCafferty ad in the Spring Hill *New Era* on August 10, 1893. Kansas State Historical Society.

Walt McCafferty's

Great Golden Shows, Tinge World's Museum, Oriental Egyptian Caravan and Rural Japanese Circus will exhibit at

Spring Hill, Monday, August 14



—NEW 25-CENT AGGRESSION EVER EXHIBITED.

A grand mixed program. A show to talk about. A brilliant occasion rivaling the lights of America's legitimate. A real show—everybody a star from leading exhibitions.

HAZARDOUS TIGHT ROPE ARTISTS.

Gentlemen and Funny Clowns. The Most Wonderful Contortionists. The best high wire performers. The most fearless aerial artists. Most wonderful of trained animals.

OGAWA'S

Royal Japanese Circus.

to signify in advance of all other Japanese performers who are exhibiting or ever have exhibited in America, and whose artistic, like, graceful and aerial performances are revolutions in the genre art. As a result, not only the audience but the world is now, and will be, more interested.

There were and daughters of the Flower Kingdom who won the medal of merit for their skill and the management of the Great Golden Shows look upon them as an inviolable organization in their already formidable and world vanquishing great double company of stellar performers.

Before the Mikado's Court in Japan.

This remarkable corps of skilled and wonderful Japanese have held the grand distinction of frequently appearing at the Mikado's Court by special command and are now making a limited tour through America by permission of that potentate.

PROF. CHAS. WRAY'S

BAND OF FINE SOLOISTS.

The finest and most perfect musical organization with any limited exhibition. They will perform elegant selections from the most popular music of the day and will present a musical program of fish and fowl, and other interesting and varied with brilliant games.

GRAND STREET PARADE

At 10:00. Marching Music to the.

Admission free, but a show. Two performances daily. Open at 1 and 3 o'clock p. m. Don't forget the date, Monday, August 14.

ADMISSION - - - 25 CENTS.

with twelve men; 'Shorty' Marshbron, head cook, with four men; Thomas Carr, in charge of properties, with three men; Thomas Houghs, in charge of lights; Theodore Bretta (sic), equestrian director; Chas. Danford, in charge of stands. Performers: Bretta and wife, Bishop Bros., three in number; Agowa troupe of Japs, four in number; C. Murphy, Geo. Rhen, Maudie Rhen, and Sig Harris. We travel by wagons and carry forty head of stock, fourteen baggage wagons, two passenger hacks, two band wagons, one clown cart. The show is doing good business, and the 'lady in white' makes her appearance every Tuesday. We are traveling through Kansas and Missouri. Sig. Harris joined July 22 at Meriden, Kan."

The name of a new band leader—Prof. Charles Wray—appeared in the *Waverly Gazette* advertisement for the exhibits of August 1. In the opinion of the *Gazette*, "McCafferty's circus gave a very creditable performance Tuesday, but the attendance was hardly large enough to pay expenses."

Hard times fell upon Kansas in the late summer and early fall of 1893. Although the big shows such as Ringling, Forepaugh and Cook & Whitby continued to experience satisfactory ticket sales, the small shows like the Great Golden suffered a severe loss of revenue.

The *LeRoy Reporter* reported that, "The entertainments [August 3] were only fairly well attended and McCafferty failed to make expenses. The attempt to bulldoze him out of ten dollars reflects no credit on those who were engaged in it."

"Pleasanton was full of people circus day [August 9] but they did not attend the show," the *Observer* related. "The performances were very good for a small show especially the acts of the Japs."

The Pleasanton *Herald* carried the following: "Walt. McCafferty's twenty-five cent show exhibited here last Wednesday, and although it was not well patronized in the evening it was well worth the price of admission. The two Japanese performers, the iron jawed lady and Mr. Harris, the juggler, are good artists and deserve the patronage of the public. Their next exhibition will be in La Cygne, Kan."

According to the *Louisburg Herald*, "The show, last Saturday [August 12], was greeted by a large audience, in the afternoon, and although the performance was not quite up to the expectations of some, there was a fair crowd in the evening. They paid all their debts before leaving town and therefore did not carry the ill will of any of our people with them."

There was no need to carry away any local ill-will for the show was generating

enough tension of its own, as the *Herald* reported.

"One of the teamsters of Walter McCafferty's circus was arrested last Saturday night, but was released on account of no one appearing against him. The manager of the circus had him arrested on the charge that he had threatened to kill him and was carrying a concealed weapon."

An indication of the hard times in Kansas was shown in a report in the *Eudora News* on the exhibitions of August 16: "During the recent visit here of Mr. McCafferty's show a man with his wife and three daughters walked to the entrance and presenting three admissions to the ticket taker started to go. He was stopped and asked for the price of two additional tickets. The man declared he had not another cent to call his own and after parleying a few minutes he told the girls to go in and they (the old folks) would remain outside. Seeing that it was a clear case of show down and that the man was telling the truth, all were permitted to enter. Afterward it was ascertained that in the morning the man had purchased \$1.00 worth of sugar on credit from one of our merchants and sold it to another man for seventy-five cents, bought the three tickets, attempting to pass two of the girls, who were aged about 12 and 15 years respectively, as under age. Perhaps the queerest part of the whole transaction is that is an absolutely true occurrence."

The Tonganoxie *Mirror* reflected hard times at the exhibitions of August 17: "Strange to say, McCafferty's circus was accompanied by no fakirs and gamblers. The performances in the arena were as good as in larger circuses, in fact better than in some. The benches were only about half filled during their stand here. They will show at a few more towns, then will go into winter quarters at Sabetha because of the hard times."

The Winchester *Star* remarked snidely that, "The 'circus' drove in this morning [August 18] about eight o'clock from the east and we were somewhat disappointed—after seeing the outfit—in not seeing a flock of crows in the rear." The *Star* did not receive any advertising from McCafferty and such an omission was generally enough to inspire a sour response from the editor.

McCafferty's bill posters papered Muscotah on August 11th, announcing exhibitions there on Saturday, August 19. Competition from Morris' South Before the War and Darkey Town Circus existed in Muscotah with Darkey Town playing August 15, four days ahead of McCafferty. The Great Golden like most shows of the era did not hesitate to paper over the bills of the Darkey Town.

The *Record* reported that, "The Morris

circus carried an elegant little band. Rose Fisher, a notorious Atchison colored woman, is proprietress of the show."

The Great Golden Shows set up on a vacant lot north of Dr. Riggs place. One of the most interesting remarks in the *Record* was, "The alligator with the McCafferty circus was loose Saturday afternoon and ate a dozen of Dr. Riggs young chickens."

In a review of the show the *Record* said, "McCafferty's circus played here last Saturday to good business both afternoon and evening. The parade at one o'clock was a block and a half long and very good. They gave a very fair show although there were no ring horses and only a few actors. One of the clowns was splendid. Mr. McCafferty lives at Sabetha and his show went into winter quarters at that place Wednesday [August 23]. Rhen and family live at Horton and have a restaurant there. Maudie Rhen, the snake charmer, was a pupil of Miss Edna Calvert last year. McCafferty's show was a Barnum compared with Morris."

A one column ad the length of the page appeared in the Sabetha *Republican-Herald* announcing exhibitions on August 22. Mentioned were "Those 'Japs' and Baretta and wife are still with McCafferty, besides a number of new faces which will appear in the ring. This will be the Last Appearance of McCafferty's Shows in Sabetha this season as he intends making a long season south now, and will not be in Sabetha again till he ships in to spend the winter."

The show apparently laid off a few days after the Sabetha exhibitions for no dates can be found until August 28, at Fairview. Robinson, Severance, Highland and White Cloud followed.

It was a rough season with much rain and a public hoarding its quarters because of hard times. The Highland *Vidette* had the last word.

"The McCafferty show has come and gone and probably more dollars than it merited. Judging from the sorry looking outfit from actors down to crobate (sic) horses and bobbed tailed monkey, we should say it was at least 'thin.'"

Walt McCafferty may have moved into Missouri following the exhibitions at White Cloud, but wherever he was it was not a southern tour for on September 22, the Sabetha *Herald* reported that McCafferty's circus has gone into winter quarters at Dan Blakesly's place."

The known Kansas route of Walt McCafferty's Great Golden shows in 1893 was: May 6, Sabetha (Opener); May 8, Bern; May 9, Seneca; May 10, Axtell; May 11, Beatty; May 12, Frankfort; May 13, Onaga; May 15, Westmoreland; May 16, Olsburg; May 17, Randolph; May 18, Waverille; May 19, Greenleaf; May 20, Han-

over; May 22, Washington; May 23, (unknown); May 24, Cuba; May 25, Scandia; May 26, Courtland; May 27, Jewel City; May 29, Glen Elder; May 30, Downs; May 31, Osborne; June 1, Alton; June 2, Gaylord; June 3, Kirwin; June 5, Smith Centre; June 15, Morrill; June 17, Wetmore; June 18, Whiting; June 19, (unknown); July 20, Valley Falls; July 21, Oskaloosa; July 22, Meriden; July 24, St. Marys; July 25, Wamego; July 26, Alma; July 27, Eskridge (Blown); July 28, Burlingame; July 29, Lyndon; July 31, Melvern; August 1, Waverly; August 2, Westphalia; August 3, Le Roy; August 4, Colony; August 5, (unknown); August 7, Blue Mound; August

8, Mound City; August 9, Pleasanton; August 10, La Cygne; August 11, Osawatomie; August 12, Louisburg; August 14, Spring Hill; August 15, (unknown); August 16, Eudora; August 17, Tonganoxie; August 18, Winchester; August 19, Muscotah; August 21, Horton; August 22, Sabetha; August 28, Fairview; August 29, Robinson; August 30, Severance; August 31, Highland; September 1, White Cloud; September 22, Sabetha (Winter Quarters, no show).

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Inc. Topeka, Kansas.

MONTIE MONTANA (Not Without My Horse!)

"Couldn't put it down!"
"Destined to be a classic!"
"The whole family loves it!"

**Personally
Autographed
All occasion gift!**

Over 250 Pictures
Many in color!

Montie tells of his
early days in the
circus:

Al G. Barnes
Buck Jones-
Wild West
Tom Mix,
Hoot Gibson
and more...

**Read about the Ringling Bros.
horse that helped start it all!**

Just \$19.95 + \$2.95 S & H
+ \$1.65 Tax for CA Residents
Shipped immediately!

Send check or M.O. to:

Double M Company
Box 6102
Agua Dulce, CA 91350
(805) 268-1900

Visa/Mastercard
Please include: Name
Address, Card #,
Expiration Date and
Signature

Mike Martin's

CIRCUS HOBBY HALL

SPECIAL - 100th ANNIVERSARY EDITION 1970 PROGRAM

Loaded with photo and show history galore, this colorful program traces the show's 1st 100 years! Absolutely MINT copies, in very short supply, two gorgeous posters are included. Plus 100th Anniversary Press Pass - in color with Lou Jacob artwork.

Limited Supply \$12.50 Ea. Postpaid



120th EDITION - FLAVIO TOGNI PRESS KITS

Loaded with press stories and glossy photos, these tri-fold kits introduce Europe's hottest circus star! Covers are lavishly illustrated with color photos. The insides are packed with information, important dates in circus history plus a dictionary of circus terms.

Limited Supply \$12.50 Ea. Postpaid

121st EDITION - DAVID LARIBLE PRESS KITS

These classy, colorful kits were created for the show's New York opening. Filled with photos and loaded with background stories on Ringling's newest sensation - DAVID LARIBLE and other star performers.

With a full color, photo cover the kits also include the official invitations to the gala opening night party and show premiere.

Limited Supply \$12.50 Ea. Postpaid

Circus Route Books

RINGLING/BARNUM 1964 SEASON

Sprinkled throughout with photos, these marvelous hardback books give the route, personnel and statistics for the entire season and every route since the big shows combined - 1919 through 1963!

Plus, you'll enjoy reading the captivating stories by Dick Barstow, Pat Valdo, Lloyd Morgan, Rudy Bundy and Henry and John Ringling North.

Limited Supply \$12.50 Ea. Postpaid

SPARKS CIRCUS - 1946 SEASON

Fondly known as the "Biggest Little Show on the Road". Damoo Dhotre is pictured on the cover of these scarce, route books.

The mileage, route and program are inside. Listed are well known performers, Billy and George Barton, Damoo Dhotre, The Riding Conleys and many more!

Limited Supply \$11.50 Ea. Postpaid

CIRCUS PHOTOS A COLLECTOR'S BONANZA!

Here's A Real Steal! 3 Doz. 8 X 10 Glossies, circus act publicity photos, Acts from the 40's, 50's and 60's and some from today. Mostly B&W, some color and every kind of act is included: trained animals, clowns aerial acts, ground acts, novelty performers.

Not all famous names -- But all well known in the business. Plus, we've added publicity brochures from some of the acts to this super photo package. You won't be disappointed --- unless you don't order your set now!

"36 Photos Plus"

Limited Supply \$17.50 Ea. Postpaid

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:

Mike Martin

Dept. BW - 16840 S.W. 62 St.
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33331
Fla. residents add 6% Sales tax

CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY

A Connecticut magazine recently wrote this about Adam Bardy's book:

"If you're still a kid at heart when the circus comes to town, you'll love Adam Bardy's life story of his adventures of circus life. Adam Bardy was born in Webster on May 21, 1907. Back in 1907 thousands of immigrants from Europe kept coming to America.

"Bardy's life might be compared somewhat to Mark Twain's boyhood heroes Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, and back in 1907 in June, Mark Twain met George Bernard Shaw in London. It was a rainy Saturday when the Buffalo Bill Circus came to Webster. Adam Bardy was only 8 years old when he crawled into a circus wagon that night. However on Sunday morning when he crawled out of his hiding place, he wanted to get back home. Bardy had to have a guardian angel as he got back home before he was missed.

"In 1924 Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey Circus played in Worcester. Bardy's interest in the circus was renewed and he got a job with the side show. The circus liked getting young men to join them because it was out of young people that real circus troupers were made.

"Bardy found that circus life in the roaring twenties was rough and tough. On sunny days it was wonderful, but on rainy days you went to bed in the circus cars with wet clothes, and you would have to wait for a sunny day to dry out. If you could put in a full circus season under these conditions, you would be called a real trouser. In the twenties Ringling Bros. & Barnum and Bailey was a railroad circus. It traveled in four sections. The first section was the cookhouse crew along with some circus wagons that carried the cookhouse. The second section carried most of the circus wagons and the stock cars full of work horses and nearly all the working crew. The third section carried the wild animal cages. There were 43 elephants with the circus.

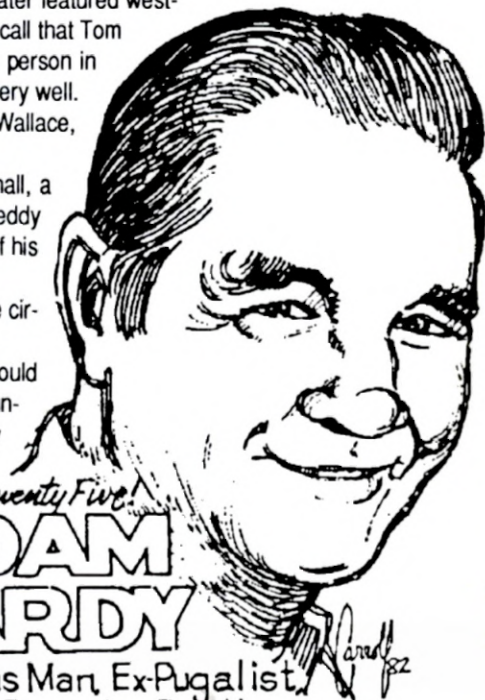
"One of our heroes was Tom Mix and on Saturday afternoon when the local movie theater featured westerns. Tom Mix and his wonder horse Tony was a favorite of young and old movie fans. We recall that Tom Mix was with the Sells Floto Circus and we were invited to attend the circus and see Mix in person in Willimantic. Adam Bardy was working with the Sells-Floto Circus at the time and knew Mix very well. There were more circuses in business in the twenties than there are now. Hagenback and Wallace, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sparks and Walter L. Main were some of the big ones.

"Few folks realized that Tom Mix was at one time a real sheriff, a Deputy U.S. Marshall, a Texas Ranger, a real cow puncher and ranch foreman. He was even Roughrider under Teddy Roosevelt. For Bardy to personally know and work with Mix was one of the truly great thrills of his wonderful life. Mix was one of the truly greats of the silent movies.

"Adam Bardy at the age of 86 can look back at his many adventurous experiences in the circus, life with Gypsies, fortune telling, bootlegging, marriages, and finding love and happiness.

"He has written a book *The Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*. This book would have made a wonderful movie with enough wholesome family desires of an eight year old "running away" for a day; joining the circus and becoming a boss canvasman and having his crew set up the big circus tent while still a teen-ager. Fortune telling, boxing, bootlegging, and after four score years becoming a successful author. With the right promotional agency, the life and adventures of Adam Bardy could be made into a television series that might parallel the Untouchables and Little House on the Prairie. Many men desire the anonymity of Mister X but Adam Bardy is a real Mr. X . . . Ex-Circus Man, Ex-Pugilist, Ex-Still Operator, Ex-Bootlegger, Ex-Fortune Teller, and an excellent author."

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. For an autographed copy of *Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy*, send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



A Young Seventy Five!
**ADAM
BARDY**

Ex-Circus Man, Ex-Pugilist,
Ex-Still Operator, Bootlegger,
Fortune Teller, And Author.

ADAM BARDY
87 Alm Rd.
Thompson, CT 06277